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NEW STATESMAN

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STATE CAPITALISM:

The high cost of Kenneth Keith

Murdoch mugs Melbourne Mafia
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Eva Figes on Georges Sand/John Spurling: Post-Impressionism
Anthony Arblaster: the Socialis[illegible] Register/Rock record releases
David Lodge on Doris Lessing/Andrew Clements: Shostakovich

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NEW STATESMAN
Volume 98 30 November 1979 No 2541

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Iranian fantasies

ANY MILITANT political movement of a generally anti-Western character must expect to be presented to Western audiences as deranged. The alleged 'mental instability' of Dr Mossadeq was one of the many excuses for the Anglo-American coup in Iran in 1953 – a violation of international norms not less grave than the sequestering of an embassy. That coup, riveting the greedy (and certainly crazy) Pahlavi family onto a hostile Iranian people, is at the root of Iran's present discontents.

The holding of diplomatic hostages is a cruel and stupid policy, which nobody can justify. But even if the 'incident' were brought to a close instantly, there would still remain the lasting damage done to relations between Iran and the West, and permanent distortions inflicted on our view of Islam. (A moratorium on hostages, by the way, ought to comprehend the shameful treatment visited by American cops and officials on unoffending Iranian students.)

If we start to believe that the turbulence in Iran is the work of one demented old mullah, we shall be deceiving ourselves very badly. True, in the century's early years Mohammed Abdullah Hassan was labelled the 'Mad Mullah' because he was unable to see why Britain should own Somaliland: true, the process was repeated with De Valera, Kenyatta, Nasser, Soekarno, Castro and many others. But foolishness doesn't become wisdom merely by repetition, and in every previous case it has taken a great haemorrhage of blood and credit to correct the matter.

How does the record really stand between Iran and the United States? Twenty-five years of foreign-imposed dictatorship has left a huge burden of humiliation for Iran to overcome. A quarter of a century, during which torture and murder on the part of the regime claimed thousands of lives; during which the natural resources of the country were cynically plundered; during which (never to be forgotten) Iranian students and emigrants were *routinely* deported from the United States at the request of the SAVAK. Their graves are unmarked.

There were chances to redeem this record, and Carter's 'human rights' policy gave hope to many Iranian dissidents during the events of last year. But once he publicly endorsed the Shah, a few days after the Jaleh Square massacre on 8 September 1978, the President's chances of good relations with the future Iran were effectively nil. Almost all reporters of any shade have confirmed that Khomeini's *anti-American* policies at least command majority support.

Herein lies the danger of American sabre-rattling and self-righteousness. For on every other front, Khomeini's policies have been manifestly disastrous for Iran. His repression of Kurdistan, his medieval ignorance of economic affairs, his authoritarian morality and his narrow chauvinism combine to condemn him as far as any thinking socialist or liberal is concerned.

But, insofar as he represents the national pride of Iran, the old man will be supported against the United States. This relatively secure position has not stopped him making a shambles of his case. How could the United States be expected to return even a criminal murderer like the Shah to a country dominated by kangaroo courts? Our hearts ought to bleed far more for the democrats and dissidents who have perished at their hands – but it is impossible to contemplate the Shah's extradition under present circumstances.

Other details are ignored. Eric Rouleau's articles in *Le Monde* have shown, by the use of captured documents, that the US Embassy in Tehran was indeed being used partly as a centre for intelligence operations targeted against the Iranian revolution. It could scarcely be otherwise, but it should not be forgotten. Nor should Carter's desire for re-election be left out of account.

If Iran provides the long-awaited excuse for an intervention in the oilfields, then two very undesirable things will happen. First, Khomeini's position will become as morally unassailable, in Iranian terms, as was Nasser's after Suez. Second, those in the United States who have been brooding over the 'loss' of Indochina will be put back at the controls of foreign policy. The resulting combinations would be strikingly bad for Iran, for America and for all countries associated with the quarrel (ours very much included).

But even if these 'worst-case' contingencies are avoided, and both hostages and oilfields escape violence, there is still a terrible legacy of propaganda and prejudice. Much Western discussion of the affair has mirrored the Khomeini mentality, seeing plots and conspiracies everywhere – all the way from Qom to the sacred places of Mecca. This lack of differentiation, or failure to distinguish between Iranians and Arabs, Sunni and Shia, nationalism and fanaticism, is nothing more than the old colonial attitude of 'they all look the same to me'. The near and middle East will be areas of unrest and conflict for many years to come – can it really be claimed that the Western public is receiving an education in this complexity? Or do our press and politicians prefer to trade on racial and religious memories? If the latter, in what way do they differ from Khomeini?

Contrary to appearances, the Khomeini regime is not entirely inflexible. After encountering stiff resistance in Kurdistan, it retreated from earlier intransigence and now negotiates with people it was calling 'agents of the devil' only a few weeks ago. Since the virtual pogrom launched by pro-Khomeini mobs against the Left in August, there has been a gradual reappearance of secular and socialist organisations. (What encouragement have *they* had, even from the West's social democracies?)

So, if Western nations can refrain from confirming Iranian suspicions about them, there is some hope of a just settlement. Meanwhile, the Islamic fundamentalists and the American 'madman war' theorists are united in needing each other.

Iran may be rich in oil, but in every other way it is a wretchedly underdeveloped country. This condition has been exacerbated down the years by foreign intervention, from Tsarist Russia and Britain in the last century and from Stalin's Russia, Britain and the United States in our own time. One incontrovertible lesson of the Iranian revolution is that the people of that country wish, in their overwhelming majority, to be rid of outside meddling and exploitation. The obvious will still bear repetition – whatever the short term temptations to the contrary, the great powers need to keep their hands off Iran.

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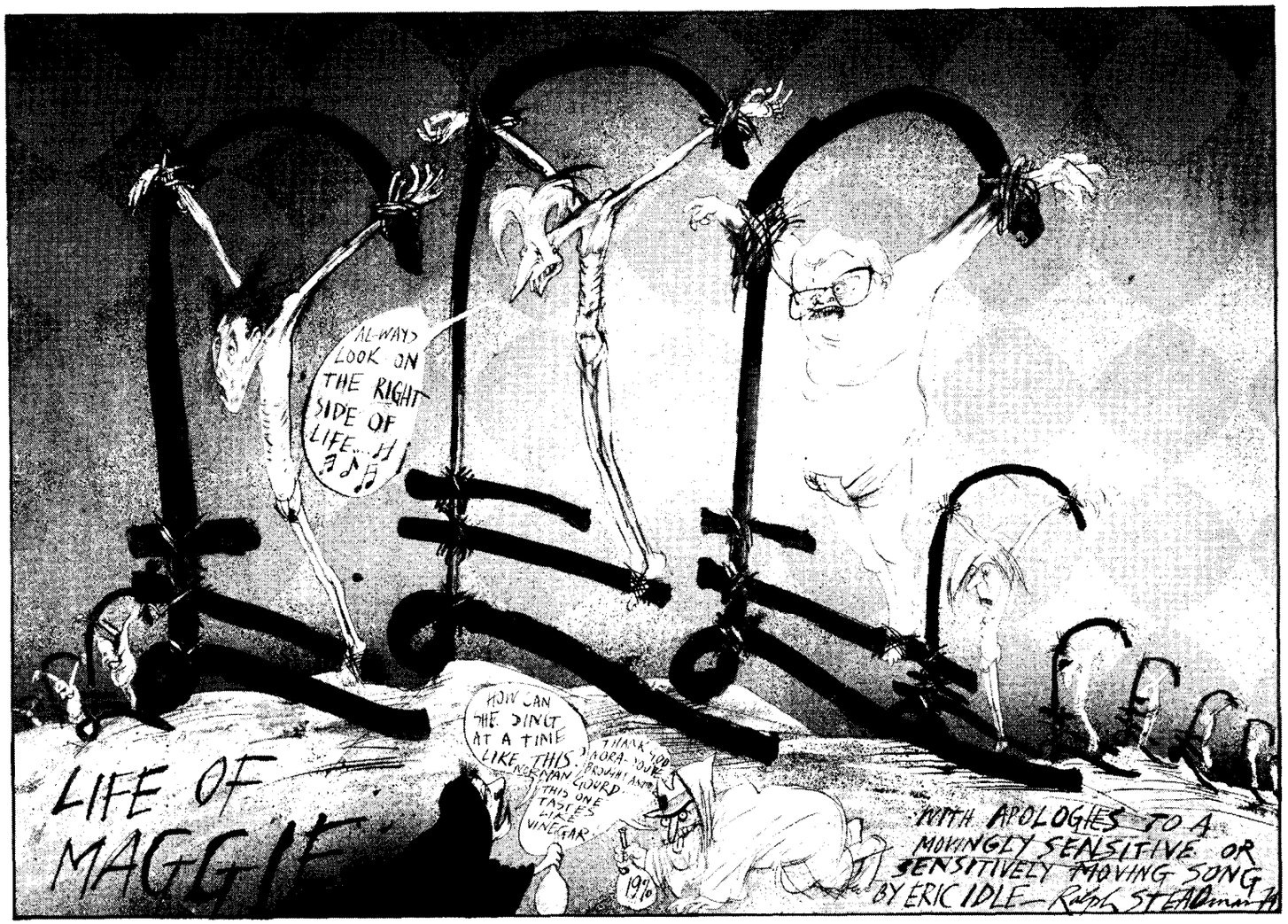
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THIS ONE TASTES LIKE VINEGAR
19%
WITH APOLOGIES TO A MOVINGLY SENSITIVE OR SENSITIVELY MOVING SONG BY ERIC IDLE

NOTES

Council house sales: truth will out

John Forsyth writes: At the Tory Party conference back in the trouble-free days of October a speaker in the housing debate won a round of enthusiastic applause by declaring that the government's pledge to give all council tenants the right to buy their homes was 'an article of faith and has nothing to do with a housing strategy'. Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment, agreed wholeheartedly and subsequently undertook to ensure that his legislation would be so watertight that bloody-minded Labour councils would be able to hold up the sales 'not for a month, not for a week, not for a single day'.

Now, however, Heseltine is finding that his plans are attracting more and more criticism from his own supporters. Concessions will be required to placate them, which will undermine still further the shaky coherence of the proposals. In the current issue of *Roof*, Shelter's housing magazine, the results of a recent survey show that, of Conservative-controlled councils which have made a decision, nearly a third are opposed to the government's requirement that they should offer for sale their entire stock, with minor exceptions. Few, if any, are wholly opposed to sales, but many want to keep local discretion over the disposal of their stock.

Among independent councils the majority in favour of keeping local discretion, according to *Roof*, was a massive three to one. Public housing enthusiasts may argue that such councils, most of which are small town or rural authorities, have not built enough council houses anyway; even so, what has been built has generally been carefully planned and husbanded over a number of years. The councils resent being told to sell it off cheaply – especially now that their last means of indirect control is to be abolished. The pre-emption period which previously applied to all sales made with a discount on market value allowed councils first option on the resale within a five-year period, or sometimes longer.

Part of the Heseltine plan was that council sales would be financed as far as possible by building societies – which would mean an immediate cash income to the council. However, the recent leap in the mortgage rate means that few aspiring council house buyers in their right minds will even apply for a private mortgage when they have a statutory right to a council mortgage several percentage points of interest cheaper.

The flimsy facade of the 'benefit to public expenditure' provided by council house sales showed more sizeable cracks on Monday after the *Guardian's* disclosure of an internal Department of the Environment paper which confirmed the predictions made by Bernard Kilroy in last week's NS: small short-term gains from the sales will turn very quickly into losses – as much as £8,535 per house by the end of the century – as the income from the assets stripped today is dwarfed by their potential income in years to come.

So the government can't even plead ignorance. In the Commons on Monday Housing Minister John Stanley admitted that a parliamentary answer he had given in July – when he said that information on the cost of council house sales was 'not available' – had been false (Michael Heseltine said later that Stanley's original answer had been changed through 'clerical error'.) It is now hoped that the Comptroller and Auditor-General – who is to investigate the financial effects of the sales – will force the government to face a few doctrinally uncomfortable facts.

The arms race: should we run faster?

Robin Cook writes: The decision to deploy so-called 'theatre' nuclear forces in Nato appears to be a matter that the government does not consider open to debate. Yet the assumptions behind this decision are suspect, to say the least. The rationale offered by Nato is that the introduction of the new Soviet SS-20, an intermediate range ballistic missile, needs to be countered. The brass-hats favour a large number of ground-based cruise missiles, of which 160 would be positioned in Britain, presumably at US-controlled sites in Oxfordshire and East Anglia.

The SS-20 does not, however, represent a new Soviet capability, or a strategic imbalance. It replaces 600 older SS-4 and SS-5 missiles aimed at Western Europe. Similar Western systems have existed for many years; they include 150 F-111s in Britain (the number has doubled in the last two years), 100 A6 and A7 carrier-based bombers in European waters, and 464 warheads of US Polaris and Poseidon submarines, which are available to hit targets in Europe.

Even if the Soviets were to have a favourable imbalance in one particular class of weapon, the overall nuclear line-up remains entirely unfavourable to them. The West has a two-to-one advantage in short-range battlefield nuclear weapons, and the US will retain a lead in strategic warheads throughout the life of the SALT II treaty.

Supporters of the new Nato weapons argue that they will enhance deterrence since the US would readily authorise the launch of such missiles from Europe in a continental war which would exclude strikes against the territory of either major power. Otherwise, the argument goes, deterrence may fail

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because of American reluctance to risk a global nuclear exchange following an attack on Western Europe. The hypothesis that a cruise missile from Colchester would be more favourably received than an inter-continental missile from Colorado is fragile to the point of snapping. Moreover, do we accept that we are better off because the Americans will be more willing to fire when the weapons are based on our territory rather than theirs? Three times already this decade the US has moved to a war footing without apparently consulting allies. Collective security, as well as initiatives for arms control, will suffer further if an irrevocable political commitment to the new weapons is made. We shall not escape this alarming new arms race by trying to run faster.

Boom time for private medicine

Steve Kelly writes: The abolition of the Health Services Board, to be announced shortly by Mrs Thatcher's ministerial entrepreneurs, will be yet another fillip to the moguls of private medicine currently invading Britain. Already London and the North West in particular are being swamped by America's medical multinationals out to make a quick buck from the health service cutbacks, and the new *laissez-faire* brand of economics. The abolition of the board, which carefully scrutinises all applications for private hospital building, removes another obstacle set in the way of private medicine by the Labour government. Coupled with this is a new contract for hospital consultants currently being negotiated with the DHSS, which seems certain to offer consultants further encouragement to work in the private sector. The new formula will insist that consultants surrender only one-eleventh of their salary if they go part-time, rather than the previous two-elevenths.

But it is in the North West, particularly in the green belt area of Cheshire, where the boom is biggest. By the beginning of next year, BUPA (2.25 million subscribers and £9 million 'surplus' last year) will be offering Manchester the first complete private health service outside London. A screen testing centre able to give regular medicals to its subscribers will open in the city centre alongside a nursing agency which can provide home nursing. At the same time BUPA's 62 bed hospital in unfashionable Whalley Range in Manchester is being extended to provide 86 beds and two new operating theatres.

And on the outskirts of the city at Cheadle the Americans have moved in to start building the largest private hospital in the country. American Medical International (head office — Beverly Hills) plans a 150 bed, £6 million complex to rival its Princess Grace and Harley Street clinics in London. Other American companies, including one registered in the Cayman Isles, are also known to be scouring the North West for suitable sites and partners.

In London the Wellington, St John's Wood, is owned by Humana, which controls two per cent of all American hospitals. At £900 per week clients at its 102 bed hospital (130 nurses) tend to be of the richer variety. Hospital Corporation International of Nashville and another American group, Hospital Affiliates, are also setting up in Britain.

To the north of Manchester at Rochdale, a new hospital owned by a consortium of local businessmen and consultants has been operational for some years while another is being planned by the Oldham-based Clinicare. Specialist in cosmetic operations and vasectomies, Clinicare is unashamedly profit motivated and forecasts that big business will soon jump on the bandwagon. And Grand Metropolitan Hotels is known to have made discreet inquiries already about buying into the private hospital business though so far has made no firm offers.

For the moment British business is generally biding its time, content to see organisations like BUPA and PPP (Private Patients Plan) expand with its help. While private subscriptions have been falling over the last few years, company subscriptions have boomed during the years of wage restraint. BUPA claims that as a result of deals with various trade unions, it now covers 40,000 union members. It remains a charity (although its subscriptions are not tax deductible), but its service at £50 a day for five-star accommodation, plus consultants and operation fees on top, make it essentially a profit-making business. If it fails to make a 'surplus', as BUPA prefers to call it, then it cannot survive.

France fears falling birth rate

Jane Jessel writes from Paris: The French parliament's debate and vote on the abortion law this week contained a dimension that will be lacking from discussions on the Corrie Bill at Westminster. Those opposing the renewal of Simone Veil's 1974 Act (which was introduced experimentally for five years and legalises abortion only in the first ten weeks of pregnancy) have introduced, in addition to religious and moral objections, an argument to strike at the heart of every patriotic Frenchman – *dénatalité*, or the falling of the birth rate. This anti-abortion lobby is largely composed of members of one of the more overtly nationalistic French political parties, the Gaullists. During the July European elections, in which Mme Veil was a leading candidate, former Gaullist Prime Minister Michel Debré consistently attacked the abortion law and criticised Mme Veil for 'presiding over a steep decline in the birth rate.'

Monique Pelletier, Minister for Women's Affairs, announced last month that the number of abortions, as far as could be ascertained, had not increased since the Act was passed: it remained at around 250,000 a year. The law had made medically safe many abortions which would formerly have been carried out secretly, she said. Nevertheless, the government is taking *dénatalité* seriously, judging by the measures it has taken to persuade French couples to produce more children.

Over the past few years it has been successful in reducing perinatal deaths through making maternity benefits conditional on regular medical checks during pregnancy. Family allowances were increased for third and subsequent children. Last month Mme Pelletier announced yet more measures to induce couples to increase their families – at a time when the government is trying to limit public spending. These include higher family allowances for three or more children, giving large families at least 3 per cent greater real incomes than smaller ones; cheap public transport for parents and third and subsequent children; continued payment of family allowances for those children still in education between the ages of 18 and 20; birth grants of 10,000 francs (about £1,150) for third and subsequent children; lump sum payments of 8120 francs to replace the present system of postnatal payments which currently total 2467 francs over two years; maternity leave to be increased from four to six months; right to retirement benefit for all mothers of three or more children; and 100 per cent loans for the purchase of larger homes.

Battered women

Felicity Jones writes: The cuts in government spending, which threaten to hit women the hardest, dominated the Scottish TUC's women's conference in Edinburgh last week. It was indeed a sad reflection on how far women still have to go towards equality to see motion after motion coming before the conference just to protect those hard-won rights which women have taken years to achieve.

The most controversial issues at the conference were abortion and the disbanding of the women's conference. A handful of delegates appeared to let their personal consciences get in the way of their representative status when it came to debating the Corrie Abortion Bill. But the conference overwhelmingly reaffirmed its commitment to campaign and demonstrate against it and support the principle of a woman's right to choose, in spite of the gory picture-waving of unborn foetuses by one delegate.

It was ironic that the siren song for the conference to disband itself should coincide with what was without doubt one of the most militant-minded and passionately committed conferences in many years (it was the first two-day conference in its fifty-two year history). The movers' claim that the women's conference was only a 'talking shop' into which women had been conveniently sidetracked met with howls of protest from the floor. But it took Welshwoman Dilys Hardacre, a delegate from the white collar engineers' union, TASS, to point out that, though it was a splendid notion in an ideal world, it would be sheer lunacy for women trade unionists to throw away their only weapon at the time of such a concerted attack on their rights. Every attempt to get a similar conference for Wales had fallen so far on deaf ears, she said. Amid all the hue and cry, it was admitted that more needed to be done at grassroots level to get women involved in union affairs and to get issues taken up by the Scottish TUC, perhaps with a day set aside at each national conference to debate motions passed at the women's conference. At least one major union, the AUEW, has changed its mind about giving women two permanent seats on the STUC General Council and now favours the idea. So that should make the vote a lot closer at the next STUC conference, though the GMWU and the TGWU are still opposed. There are already two seats reserved for women on the TUC General Council, and there are calls to increase the number to nine.

A nuclear attack

Duncan Campbell writes: The Anti-Nuclear Campaign (ANC), launched last Saturday, is a new umbrella organisation aimed to stop nuclear power. The distinctive feature of the ANC is the emphasis – due in no small part to Arthur Scargill's alarm at his perception of the 'brown rice and sandals' image of other nuclear critics – on a platform broad enough to accommodate trade unions as well as environmental groups. Thus the campaign doesn't merely propose the halting of the nuclear power programme and the development of alternative energy sources, but also stresses the need to 'guarantee employment during the changeover' (away from nuclear generation of electricity).

The campaign's present steering committee is carefully designed to include union activists, regional anti-nuclear groups from Scotland to the southwest, and organisations as diverse as the Socialist Workers' Party and the Conservation Society. Some active groups – principally the Friends of the Earth — have not joined the coalition, while others – like the London Greenpeace movement – oppose *any* central organisation on principle. But most of these critics recognise the valuable role that can be played by the ANC. Most unions, even some with members inside the nuclear industry, are ill-informed on energy issues. Many unions have no clear policy on nuclear power, and thus tend to drift with the historical consensus when the subject is debated, as at this year's TUC (see NS 14 September). Resistance is, however, growing. Apart from working within the Labour movement, ANC plans to assist local groups with information and leaflets. Brown rice will not be available.

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Last days at the NEB

What was the real dispute between Sir Kenneth Keith of Rolls-Royce and Sir Leslie Murphy of the NEB? Why did Sir Keith Joseph decide to bring Roll-Royce back under the wing of the Department of Industry? CHRISTOPHER HIRD and PATRICK WINTOUR investigate what has been happening in this corner of state capitalism.

Sir Leslie Murphy (back, right) with Sir Kenneth Keith (foreground). Top inset – Sir Keith Joseph: bottom – Eric Varley

Montage by Michael Bennett

ONE OF THE FIRST meetings which Leslie Murphy attended as deputy chairman of the National Enterprise Board was in Lord Goodman's London flat. It had been called to deal with the problem of Sir Kenneth Keith. On the insistence of Eric Heffer, then a junior industry minister, the new National Enterprise Board was to hold the government's shares in aero-engine makers Rolls-Royce. Rolls' chairman, merchant banker Sir Kenneth Keith, who had been persuaded to take on this job under a Tory government by his friend Lord Carrington and John Davies, objected to the idea vehemently. But, despite the arguments that he pressed on Labour ministers about the virtue of Rolls staying under the wing of the Department of Industry, Sir Kenneth lost. The purpose of the meeting at Lord Goodman's flat – attended by a bevy of senior civil servants – was to draw up a memorandum of understanding between Lord Ryder, of the National Enterprise Board and Sir Kenneth, governing the relationship between the two organisations. Leslie Murphy looked on amazed as an extremely elaborate form of words was devised to try and blur the responsibility that Rolls had to its parent company, the NEB. In the private sector, he mused, such a thing would never happen. Later, when the NEB told Rolls that it would be expected to work to a budget with financial limits, Sir Kenneth Keith – who for the last few years had been reporting to the Department of Industry – remarked that it was the first time he had ever had to do such a thing.

From the beginning, then, there was a tension between the NEB and Rolls-Royce. Sir Kenneth Keith had no desire to be accountable to any other businessman (at one of the more acrimonious meetings between him and Sir Leslie Murphy in coming years he was to taunt Murphy with being only a *deputy* chairman of merchant bankers Schroder Wagg, while he, Keith, was chairman of Hill Samuel). But the argument between the two men was essentially one between two businessmen about how a company was to be run; in many respects the fact that it was government-owned, under a Labour government, was almost immaterial. However, the disagreement over how this corner of state capitalism was run was sharp enough for the board of the NEB to resign if it could not be sure of getting its way.

TO START WITH, relations between Rolls and the NEB were not at all bad. The head of the NEB Rolls support team, Dr Robert Lickley, was formerly a senior executive with Hawker Siddeley and his technical knowledge was respected by people at Rolls. The two groups even kept on quite cordial terms over the dispute about the 1978 Corporate Plan, towards the end of 1977. Sir Leslie Murphy was sufficiently concerned about the draft of this plan to address the Rolls board, suggesting various changes. Rolls have a slightly different version of these events, saying that all the changes were ones that they were going to make themselves and that they recognised that the plan was only a draft, in need of amendment, when they sent it. However as 1978 progressed the NEB thought that Rolls was going to miss its profits forecast, though Rolls say this did not happen. This was the stage at which the NEB's worries hardened. Rolls was just emerging from a period in which it had established its engineering superiority, the NEB were anxious that this should not be threatened by lax financial control.

Although the Rolls bankruptcy in 1971 was largely brought about by the high cost of belatedly developing the RB-211 engine, this investment is now beginning to pay off as airlines begin to re-equip. For the first time in almost two decades Rolls is well placed to benefit from this upswing, especially as it has an engine which consumes 5 per cent less fuel than its nearest competitors. Fuel costs equal a quarter of airlines' costs. Demand is expected to more than treble through the eighties with 4,500 planes being ordered by 1990. Rolls hopes to get 25 per cent of the civil market, accounting for about two-thirds of its own business. Most of its efforts will be directed at America, home of the three major plane manufacturers, Boeing, McDonnell Douglas and Lockheed. Rolls are committed to this major gamble, establishing recently back-up and engineering facilities in Seattle, Miami and Atlanta, Georgia.

Rolls' main emphasis is on three developments: getting the 50,000lb thrust Dash 524 engine in the Boeing 747 Jumbo and the Lockheed 500 Tri-Star and the 35,000lb thrust Dash 535 in the 160-180 seater Boeing 757. Most hopes rest on this last development; Rolls has no presence in the larger 767 Boeing and they appear to have shelved an 18,000lb thrust 432 for the 100-130 seater. In April the Labour government announced aid of £250 million for the 535 – neither of Rolls' competitors, Pratt and Whitney or General Electric, have an engine yet in this field. Already Rolls have had early success with the engine: early this year British Airways bought 19 and Eastern Airways bought 21 Boeing 757s with the engine. With spares, these contracts are worth £800 million. Three further airlines are expected to pick up this combination next summer and, in a recent visit to Joseph, a Boeing executive said that the company expected to sell 1,200 to 1,500 of the 757s, with Rolls engines in half of them. Little wonder that Rolls are hoping to double their output of the RB-211 to 300 a year: something which they claim will give them the 25 per cent productivity increase they need.

Rolls aim to get 25 per cent of the market for these engines, compared with the 20 per cent it holds at the moment. But, they argue, as the smallest producer they are in a poor position to insist on terms. Aero-engine contracts stretch over many years, putting a great strain on a maker's financial resources and making them potentially vulnerable to sharply fluctuating exchange rates and high inflation. Rolls did many of their sums when the £ was worth $1.55 and they thought it was going to $1.80 and when they believed that UK inflation would slow down. A change of one cent in the exchange rate could cost £3.5m by 1982/83. Clearly, they would like to be able to sign contracts that involved pre-payments (as some do), were denominated in sterling and

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contained adequate price escalation clauses. But, they say, the pressure of the American competition prevents this so they have to sign contracts on which the profits on the initial delivery are normally non-existent and hope that the after sales spares business (which is one to one-and-a-half times the value) will prove profitable.

The NEB took a different view. They believed that Rolls could stick out for higher prices, especially as they had such a good product. And, on the costs side, they believed there was scope for making significant savings. Productivity is 2½ times lower than Rolls' American competitors. Compared with their competitors, Rolls also had high stock levels, took a long time to make their engines, were poor at planning their production so that machinery was standing idle and lacked a proper system for ensuring that people were responsible for their budgets. The result was a much greater call than necessary on outside finance. In the last four years Rolls has generated less than a third of the new capital needed.

There was, for instance, a major dispute over a £250 million order which Rolls secured from Pan Am. The best that government officials will now admit to is that this order, signed last year, will break even. The argument for securing it was as a strategic loss leader. This was the first time that Pan Am had bought a foreign engine and Rolls were in serious danger of losing the order for 12 engines for the Lockheed Tri-Star to Pratt and Whitney. United Technologies, the parent company of Pratt and Whitney, were furious that they lost the order, with their chairman denouncing 'the extraordinarily generous loan terms provided by the British government's export credit guarantee department' which promised to provide finance and insurances not just for the cost of the engines (£115 million) but also for the £135 million Lockheed planes. 'We were not beaten by a better engine, but by the British government.'

There is little doubt that the contract will be barely profitable and has risky commitments about replacement engines. Keith also took considerable risks with exchange rates in signing the deal. But he has defended it as the necessary price for having a foothold in the American market. If Pan Am, on the grounds of commonality, insisted on Lockheed putting Pratt and Whitney engines on the Tri-Stars instead of Rolls engines, then Rolls may have been permanently blocked out of a major part of the US market. Murphy's argument was that Rolls should go for low volume, high margin business, relying on the RB-211's known low fuel consumption. However, some NEB members felt that Keith got the better of the argument and that despite the current cash flow problem, profits would materialise in the eighties.

TO TACKLE THE PROBLEMS which it saw, the NEB wanted a chief executive appointed at Rolls-Royce. Sir Kenneth Keith was indefatigable at jetting around the world, meeting Chairman Hua and sitting on the edge of Pan Am's chairman's desk until he got yes for an answer, but he did not have the taste for detail necessary to control a large enterprise day to day. However, Keith never appointed a chief executive, despite some advertising and much prodding by the NEB. The NEB found Rolls slow to respond to suggestions, or to provide information. On the last occasion on which he appeared before the NEB board just after he got the Pan Am contract Sir Kenneth Keith was, according to one present, 'openly insulting and bad mannered . . . the worst behaviour I have ever seen.' By the end of November last year Keith had stopped replying to Murphy's letters and, later, instructed his staff not to co-operate with the NEB in examining alternatives to the corporate plan.

By the turn of the year, the NEB were convinced that if they were to get the changes which they considered necessary to keep Rolls' finances under control, then Sir Kenneth would have to go. They went to see the then industry minister Eric Varley and told him so, but Murphy says that in a pre-election period it was hard to get the government to do anything. Of course, with hindsight it is easy to see that if Varley *had* removed Keith, things would be very much different today: there would have been no mass resignations at the NEB and Rolls-Royce would still be in their hands.

Soon after the election, the NEB went along to see Sir Keith Joseph and again asked that Sir Kenneth Keith be sacked. He had also been briefed by his civil servants who told him that the relationship between Rolls and the NEB was not working. Sending Rolls back to the DoI would, of course, be contrary to the Tory election pledge that the NEB would be left with the job of looking after troubled companies. Joseph agreed with the NEB's analysis of what was wrong at Rolls – essentially a management weakness – but would not commit himself to the NEB's solution. At the beginning of this month, on 7 November, he gave his decision: that Rolls-Royce would revert to the Department of Industry.

Although dealing with the tension between the two boards, this did not in any way face the underlying problem. In fact, in one way, the underlying problem had already been dealt with. Unknown to Sir Leslie Murphy, at the beginning of November Sir Kenneth Keith had handed in his resignation and was to be replaced by Sir Frank McFadzean, once boss of Shell and formerly at British Airways. The decision to return Rolls to the Department of Industry, was nothing to do directly with improving the company's performance.

The Department take the view that Rolls has a special claim to being the responsibility of a government department for three reasons: it receives large amounts of money directly to help it develop new engines ('Launch aid'); one government department – the Ministry of Defence – is a major customer and is constantly checking Rolls' technical performance and, finally, with its large export business it has to make use of the government's Export Credit Guarantees Department. But none of these arguments would have weighed heavily if Kenneth Keith had been happy to work under the NEB and if Sir Frank McFadzean had not insisted on Rolls being hived off if he was to take over as chairman. It is not hard to see why both of them wanted to get back to the department: it agrees with Rolls' expansionist sales policies and had, in the past, been a much easier taskmaster.

Furthermore, Sir Keith Joseph's behaviour after hearing that the NEB board would resign if Rolls was handed back to the department does not suggest that he took the decision out of concern for the industrial logic. The NEB made three alternative suggestions which would help deal with the management problem and still leave Rolls in the hands of the NEB: that Sir Frank McFadzean come on to the NEB board, that two NEB directors go onto the Rolls board and that someone else be made chairman – three just as suitable names were put forward. Joseph did not reply to these suggestions.

The NEB were opposed to Rolls going back to the DoI because they did not believe that the department could properly monitor a commercial organisation: at a meeting with Joseph the industrialist members of the NEB told the minister that he seemed to have little idea of how industry really worked.

So why did Joseph push ahead with the plan, especially as there was not (despite an earlier statement from him to the contrary) any threat by the Rolls board to resign if they did not return to the DoI? He was so committed that he was prepared to overrule opposition from both Sir Geoffrey Howe and Jim Prior. Given Joseph's breach of the 'understanding' between Rolls and the NEB by twice meeting Sir Kenneth Keith without the NEB knowing and given the close friendship between Mrs Thatcher and Sir Frank McFadzean, it is hard to believe that the decision was taken for any reason other than these people's antipathy towards the concept of the NEB. Sir Keith's major reason for making the break – that it was 'unseemly' for one distinguished board to have another on top of it seems to amount to little more than Sir Kenneth's own distaste for working under someone else.

Although the regime at the Department of Industry is as unlikely to be as liberal as that before the formation of the NEB the level of supervision looks as though it will be less than at the NEB. Responsibility for monitoring Rolls will be with the Industrial Development Unit whose non-civil service expertise is drawn almost entirely from accountancy, banking and finance. No-one will be working on Rolls full-time, compared with three people at the NEB. And it seems that the Government accept that they must underwrite any losses which are made on the sales contracts signed recently, without this impeding new development.

Joseph's hope that Rolls can be returned to the private sector seems somewhat fanciful. Rolls displays in an extreme form problems common to many bits of British capitalism: the profits are so uncertain and so far in the future that the private sector will not put up the considerable capital needed to develop the business, as the Department of Industry discovered when it tried to sell Rolls to Sir Arnold Weinstock's GEC. At the same time Rolls has to be kept going because of both its strategic defence importance and its size in the economy, especially as an earner of foreign exchange. But not even Sir Leslie Murphy believed the company could be conventionally profitable; private sector aero-engine makers only survive in America with massive government subsidy through the financing of defence research.

The future for the NEB is less certain. The department are much more wary of taking back British Leyland, but if they do, the NEB – now with a part-time chairman – is left with only a few things of real substance: the new companies, such as Inmos, in microelectronics, about which Joseph has still to be completely convinced. The Labour Party's grand plans for restructuring parts of British capitalism have come to nought.

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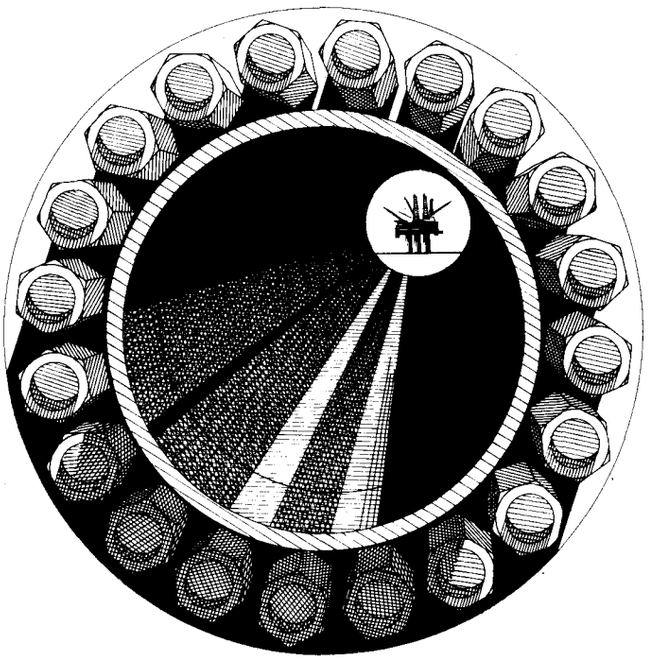

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ESPIONAGE

Witch-hunts & pseudo-history

BRUCE PAGE on loyalty-lists, and the dangerous pleasures of induced paranoia

IT'S REMARKABLE that a nation ringed with genuine, urgent problems can sustain obsession with the doings of a minor figure in a long-dead spy scandal – yet, on newspaper evidence, literate Britain is drunk on talk of left-wing 'treason'. I suggest a cooling draught, available to anyone sending to this office a cheque for £1, an addressed envelope, and a plausible explanation of need. It is a list of the Anglo-German Fellowship, 1938. It includes intriguing names: major businessmen, Tory MPs, landed gents, military men. (Meetings took place in the Unilever boardroom.)

The reason for not publishing it here will appear later. Its potential relevance to the Blunt affair concerns the statement by the late Surveyor of Pictures about his early motivations in fear of the rising influence of Fascism. Anyone reading the list of the Fellowship – in practice, an organisation for fawning on Nazism – would agree that such fears were understandable.

Sympathy for Hitlerism, in pre-war Britain, reached into the heart of the Royal Family, through the person of Edward VIII. We do not know whether his leanings towards the unspeakable derived from wounded arrogance, or twisted idealism: but we know the Germans had high hopes for him in a puppet Britain. Blunt himself (an instructive conjunction) was sent into Germany as a wartime MI5 officer to rescue documents held by the Windsors' German relatives, and the *Sunday Times* has suggested that George VI may have been worried about evidence of indiscretions by his brother.

Recently, I pointed out in the NS that the molecular flaw in British society which admitted Soviet agents like Philby appeared because at the crucial time Britain's best democrats were chiefly concerned with penetration by the totalitarianism of the Right. That concern, *in its time*, was appropriate: whatever damage the 'Cambridge spies' may have done, it is not comparable to the catastrophe which would have resulted had Britain's ruling conservatism truly yielded to Fascism's noontide allure.

The great historic truth is that, danger-signals apart, it didn't happen. There are historico-pornographers in the Left's underworld (here, I foreshadow reasons for non-publication) who revel in the dead minutiae of Anglo-Nazism, as though socialists could extract pleasure, rather than horror, from the prospect that all conservatives might be Fascists lightly manqué.

The tides of recent history have been violent and unpredictable: anyone trying to chart a course on nothing but witless allegiance to a nation-state (or a witless reading of class-interest) is apt to be dishonourably shipwrecked. Ask the ghosts of a few old Bolsheviks, or Wehrmacht officers. Or recall that we respect Willy Brandt because he betrayed his country in a fortunate cause.

Amid this nightmare, the British have been favoured. Our upper-classes, for all their contamination with anti-semitism, for all their Mitfords and Amerys, decisively did not sell out to Hitler. Equally, the British Left was never significantly sold-out to Soviet totalitarianism – and any Frenchman or German who knows the meaning of a history which incorporates such allegiances must wonder what our current opinion-mongers are up to.

Briefly: except in Scotland, the Soviet allegiance just didn't penetrate the British working-class. Among intellectual socialists (somewhat, a matter of regret) Marxist ideas made scarcely any impact during the time when they were closely tied to Soviet praxis. To be sure, there was much ill-judged admiration of the Soviet state, some of which survived into the era of Dulles, McCarthy and 'massive retaliation': its decay needs careful calibration against the processes by which Stalinist truth became undesirable, and the capacity of opposition inside America became apparent.

Those of us who never had hopes of the USSR should remember our own errors before descanting on the rapidity with which others should have abandoned theirs. The nub is that Hitler's immolation meant the Right had no post-war problem of loyalty. For the Left, complexities remained: what I find hard to believe in is an honest investigator who could doubt that the result, in all but a few cases, and those of receding significance, was an overwhelming victory for national allegiance.

ONLY A SECRET-POLICEMAN's view of history could pretend otherwise – as it would take a secret-policeman's mind to generalise the Royal Family's Fascism from Edward's lamentable record, ignoring the obviousness of their real-life anti-Fascism. But it is secret-policeman's history that we now have spread over our newspapers: the aged and the dead being invigilated on all their past loyalties, as though decisions on politics and friendship always had one cosy, authoritative answer.

Allegation is so indiscriminate as to suggest that the idea of a Left wholly sold-out to foreign authoritarianism is *actively enjoyable* to respectable opinion. Taste, compassion nor urgent business shall interfere with this luscious anatomising. To this, one can only say what one says to the socialist who enjoys the conflation of all conservatism into Fascism: sanity is not easily regained by those who cultivate the joys of paranoia.

Something here is to do with the nature of contemporary journalism, able in its investigative mode to gather, check and rationalise information on a scale once thought impossible. It is able to drench almost any life in inquiry, or make out a prosecutor's case against almost anyone subjected to its concerted gaze.

Having had a little to do with development of the technique, I'm not in doubt of its value. But there is something to be pointed out to readers about the results: these are valuable only in so far as the attack is made on well-

Springtime for Hitler – and the Duke of Windsor?

Sunday Times Archives

defended targets, by way of open tactics which expose both the attacker and the defender to commensurate risk.

These are conditions well-met in, say, William Shawcross' invigilation of Henry Kissinger – whose power and influence extend throughout the Anglo-Saxon world. How much are they satisfied in the hunting of Anthony Blunt – done, to be plain, by means of anonymous smear, followed by privileged denunciation in Parliament? A loathing for exposés of that painless sort led the NS to go too far, and assert Blunt's innocence. As we said last week, we were wrong, but the error is one we shall always be prone to.

THE ESSENCE of the secret policeman is that he moves only against certified targets, by way of smear and innuendo. It's an unlovely model for journalism, and generates results quite as grotesquely misleading as the mock-trials staged where the state police have untramelled sway. It leads, in fact, to witch-hunting, and even if someone produces tomorrow evidence that Blunt was a secret agent of real power and malevolence, it still would not justify the methods used against him.

Such methods will work as well, or ill for Left and Right, which is why it's not suitable to counter 'lists' of Communist infiltrators with 'lists' of Fascist ones. To be sure, publication of the Anglo-German list dramatises the fears which once made men like Blunt lurch towards Moscow. It also gives, removed from history's perspective, a wholly phoney idea of the trajectory of British politics. Therefore, anyone wanting it will have to produce his non-frivolous reasons, or go to the same modest trouble that it took me and my colleagues to dig it up many years ago. Nothing here is an argument for secrecy: everything is an argument against history as innuendo and journalism as smear. These are natural accretions in a secretive society. But even in one which has accommodated to Brandeis' rule that 'sunlight is the best disinfectant', there will be a need for journalists to show some discrimination in the selection of their targets. Clearly, there is some difference between Rivers and Bailey, two freelances, pursuing the long, tangled trail of the mighty sanctions-busters – and the staff of *Now!* 'exposing' a long-dead art-dealer as bag-man of the Philby syndicate. The difference is that those who seek targets which can still shoot back are in little danger of becoming witch-hunters.

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Money can't buy you health

Ruth Levitt writes: The cost of the NHS for 1979 will be more than £9,000 million – according to the third edition of the *Compendium of Health Statistics* from the Office of Health Economics.* And yet this is *less* than the spending which is general in Europe. America, Sweden and the Netherlands all spend more than 8 per cent per head of gross domestic product (GDP) on health care. Britain spends only 5.5 per cent, which only exceeds Austria, France and Japan. Where Americans spend £367 per head on health services, we spend £111.

How much has gone wrong with the once-proud NHS? First, remember that comparison figures like this are notoriously unreliable, in that like is only rarely compared with like (given different mixes of private and public organisation) and bases for data collection are splendidly varied.

Also, it's mistaken to see a straight link between spending-levels and improvements in health. If the US spends three times as much as the UK, does that make all Americans three times healthier? Clearly not. Value for money is what we want, and until we know how to measure it, there is little to be gained from worrying about unreliable international comparisons.

That said, what scope is there for picking out examples of good-value health-care from the figures? The NHS statistics certainly indicate much activity: a total of 5.3 million hospital in-patients in 1977; over 600,000 on the waiting-list; and 7.6m out-patients. Family doctors were consulted 253m times in 1978, and 378m prescriptions were dispensed. Staff numbers are rising and services being used more intensively. This still doesn't tell us whether the trends are 'good' or 'bad' or what might make things better.

But mortality figures tell more. Although death rates have fallen since the beginning of the century, there are still many avoidable deaths. Road accidents account for one death in seven among children aged 1-14, and cause *64 per cent of deaths* to males aged 15-24.

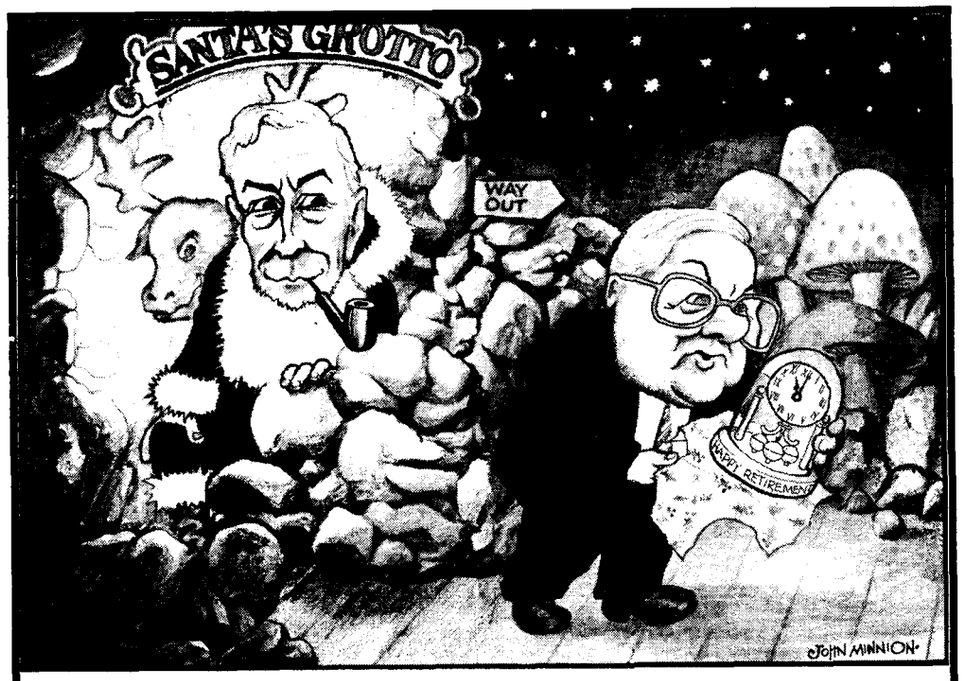
Cancers are a major cause of death. But heart disease is the major killer for men between 45 and 64. Over the last 25 years (i.e., the life, roughly, of the NHS) heart attacks have *grown* in prominence as a cause of death (80 per cent and 52 per cent increases in death rates for men and women respectively). So have deaths from pneumonia (72 per cent and 155 per cent), and cancers have become more frequent as the main cause of death. How much the NHS could and should be doing about this is very much a matter of debate.

What is highly disturbing is the evidence of social class differences in death rates. For all ages and both sexes there is a persistent, substantial difference depending on social class. Infant mortality was 2.6 times higher for social class V babies (unskilled manual-worker parents) than for class I babies (professional and managerial parents) during 1970-2. In 1976, there would have been 17.1 per cent fewer deaths had the mortality rate experienced by men of working age in social class I been the same in all classes.

Regional mortality rates also continue to differ quite dramatically. The inescapable conclusion is that the elimination of inequalities is a key challenge to our health services, along with tackling specific death rates (such as the road accident toll) which remain quite unacceptably high. So long as people in certain social classes and parts of the country continue to be unusually vulnerable to illness and death, there remains work to be done.

The statistics don't show which other countries – whether higher or lower spenders – have done better at beating this sort of problem. Nor do they show what benefits other services, like housing and education, bestow on our resistance to illness and death. The moral of the story? Treat the statistics with caution, and don't be seduced into interpretations that sound strong, but actually fail to identify which challenges can be effectively and economically met.

*£8.50 from OHE, 162 Regent Street, W1.



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IRELAND
Mary Holland

With Fitt gone, John Hume looks abroad for allies

Thatcher's 'initiative' becalmed

A MOTION AT the Social Democratic and Labour Party's annual conference at the beginning of this month called on the party leader, Gerry Fitt, 'to concern himself more with projecting the Irish dimension in Northern Irish politics and leave others to project the British dimension'. Appropriately, it came from Carrickmore which in recent weeks has been a cause of much anger to Mrs Thatcher and, in consequence, of anguish within the BBC.

This was the most outspoken criticism of Mr Fitt's rather individual style of politics which in recent years has seemed to become more oriented to Westminster, and the approval of Westminster politicians, than to the grass roots of the party of which he was leader. But observers from the Northern Ireland Office should surely have been able to read the storm signals from the party faithful in the number of motions referring to 'Irish unity' and 'the Irish dimension'. The failure to give them some recognition in the Government's working paper, published last week, may well have cost Mrs Thatcher the new initiative in Northern Ireland on which she was reputed to have set her heart. In the short term the exasperation of John Hume and his colleagues in the SDLP is understandable. If the Prime Minister, against all the advice of those who knew Northern Ireland well, was determined to push ahead with political talks, she should have ensured that the working paper was written with sufficient political sensitivity to bring all possible participants to the table – particularly as the Official Unionists had already turned down the idea. Instead, the document bears the current Tory hallmark of being bossy for the sake of it. It is impossible to figure out, for example, how proportional representation in Ulster elections, which had already been accepted, albeit grudgingly, by the Unionists, could suddenly surface as an issue for negotiation, when this was bound to make the Catholic minority feel that even those substantive gains they had made were now under threat.

Whether or not talks ever take place, something substantial has happened in Ulster politics. The departure of Gerry Fitt and the emergence of John Hume as the SDLP's new leader makes official what has long been assumed, that Fitt was a genial front man but that his deputy was the power and brains behind the party. Since the fall of the power-sharing executive in 1974 it has been Hume who has worked out the SDLP's strategy, given the party credibility even when it has had no political forum in which to express its views, taken the cause of the Catholic minority onto the international stage when it seemed abandoned by both the Westminster and the Dublin governments. In dealing with him Mrs Thatcher may find that she is up against the most formidable Irish leader since Parnell, and one with powerful allies abroad.

This is not intended as unadulterated praise. In any normal political situation Hume's most natural place would probably be on the right of the Labour party, and he would find himself there more because of his own deprived background in Derry than through any burning convictions about equality. But Northern Irish politics are not normal and in this context Hume is the man who has kept his party alive through appalling setbacks and who, on the whole, has taken his community with him. It is difficult here not to obtrude a short personal line about Gerry Fitt. In the autumn of 1968, when Northern Ireland was scarcely a speck on the horizon and I was starting a new job as an arts columnist on the Observer, it was Gerry Fitt who badgered and cajoled me into going to Northern Ireland. It was his bloodied head, prominently displayed on television on 5 October 1968, which first started people asking what could be going on in a part of the United Kingdom where a Westminster MP could be batoned by the police for taking part in a march demanding, for heaven's sake, one man one vote? He was a publicist *par excellence*, the very picture of a fast talking Tammany Hall politician doing deals on street corners, getting the voters to the poll on election day, and regaling journalists and politicians alike with grand tales of how he'd done it.

He was a master of short term tactics and they took him from the streets of Belfast to Westminster, but he made two mistakes, neither of which is to his personal discredit. He loved the club atmosphere at the House of Commons, and he was foolish enough to trust the British Labour Party with whom, as he was fond of reminding people, he voted loyally for fourteen years. The Labour Party rewarded this loyalty in its customary fashion – by doing a parliamentary deal with the Official Unionsists in order to drag out the life of the last government by some months. More than anything else this destroyed Fitt's reputation with his own party – if he couldn't even keep the Labour Party to its most minimal promises on Northern Ireland what function was he fulfilling at Westminster?

As important, Michael Foot's ignominious dealings with Powell *et al* made John Hume finally decide that no-one in British politics was to be trusted, and that if the SDLP was to continue to present the Catholic community with a political alternative to the violence of the IRA, it must both change its policies and look for friends elsewhere. He added his voice to the demand for a change of direction that had been growing within the SDLP, a public admission that its long-held moderate stance of trying to achieve political advance within a Northern Irish context was unrealistic. It was at this time tha the SDLP committed itself to seeking British withdrawal from Northern Ireland, a demand which has now been rather less aggressively rephrased into seeking an end to 'the unconditional guarantee' to the Unionists of a continued British presence.

IT WAS A CHANGE of direction which, even if he had espoused it wholeheartedly, rendered Gerry Fitt more or less irrelevant. It was clear from the middle of 1977 that Northern Ireland's Catholics were not looking only, nor even primarily, to London to solve their problems. Hume was beginning to take them into to a wider political context. The traditional source of the Catholic minority's comfort was Dublin, but since 1969 events under successive governments had demonstrated that the South could not be relied on, any more than the British Labour Party, to campaign for the rights of the Catholic minority. Instead, Hume began in earnest to construct what is now one of his strongest weapons – the commitment of leading Irish American politicians, led by Teddy Kennedy, to finding a solution to the Ulster problem. In that time Hume has also become a figure of some influence in Europe. First as a Eurocrat, now as a European MP with 140,000 votes behind him, he has made allies who are amenable to being told that Britain is doing rather less than her best in Northern Ireland.

These international allies, combined with the support of his own community, are the real clout he will bring to any conference table – not, as is always thought in Britain, the unswerving support of Mr Jack Lynch. On the contrary it would seem that Mr Hume, while he values the Irish premier, also knows that he has to be carefully watched. Another of the motions at the SDLP's recent conference deplored Mr Lynch's constant backing away from the Irish dimension in Northern Irish politics and acidly remarked that 'the Irish dimension is not his to give away'.

John Hume has come a long way from the morose and self absorbed young schoolteacher whose first brush with politics was as an honorary official of the Credit Union in the Bogside. Unlike Gerry Fitt he has developed with the years into a skilful and mature political strategist. He knows the lessons of

Gerry Fitt (left), the fast-talking Tammany Hall-style politician, gives way to John Hume, the skilful and mature strategist, who looks to Europe and to the US, rather than primarily to Southern Ireland, for support for his party's policies.

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Irish history and has no intention of being trapped by the error which has caused the downfall of so many Irish politicians – the belief that 'England may keep faith, for all that is done and said'. Nor does he intend to let his party suffer the fate of the Irish Party at Westminster after the Great War.

There is a line of logic to all this which Mr Atkins might do well to consider. To date Mr Hume has been a passionate advocate of non-violence and forthright in his condemnation of the Provisional IRA. In his first reaction to the Government's White Paper and his party's rejection of it, he made the point that the SDLP were not to be trifled with because they were the people who 'have to face the men of violence eyeball to eyeball'.

But the history of Anglo-Irish relations shows that those Irish politicians who have fared best in dealing with Britain have been those who have made it clear that the men of violence, the mob even, are waiting on the sidelines, in reserve. Daniel O'Connell knew it. Parnell knew it. De Valera knew it. It would be foolish to assume that John Hume, who has some pride in his knowledge of Irish history, does not know it too.

THE PRESS
Richard Hall

Even in defeat, the Dirty Digger needs watching

Rupert's retreating rip-off

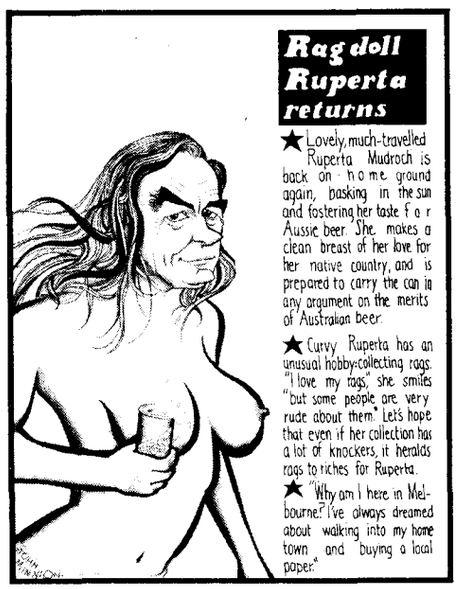
WHEN AUSTRALIAN newspaper magnate Keith Murdoch died in 1951 his son Rupert hurried back from Oxford only to find that he had, as he saw it, been cheated of his birthright. In his anxiety to build up an inheritance for his son, Keith Murdoch had been pushing his money into the out-companies of his Melbourne *Herald* group, so that after his early and unanticipated death (and the death duties it provoked) son Rupert was left with only the Adelaide *News* – an evening tabloid and the most insignificant member of the group. As things turned out this was not too much of a handicap: Murdoch now owns a TV station in Adelaide, the Sydney *Daily Mirror* and the *Truth* chain; he is founder of *The Australian*, actually a quality newspaper, and in the UK his News International company sprawls across the press.

However, Murdoch has nursed a grievance against the *Herald* group, convincing himself that they had treated his mother, Dame Elizabeth, badly, as well as himself. Last week Murdoch returned to his hometown Melbourne to try to gain control of the company which his father had created, and there was a certain atmosphere of the gunfighter returning to settle a feud. Within three days the combined establishments of Sydney and Melbourne had beaten him off. However, he inflicted considerable damage on them and the manner in which he did it should make any potential adversary in Britain tremble.

Earlier this year Murdoch bought control of Channel Ten, one of the Sydney commercial stations. As he already had two stations – the maximum allowed – he had to sell one of those in Adelaide, a deal which netted him $A19 million. His first attempt to buy into Melbourne was frustrated when another wheeler-dealer got control of the Melbourne transport group, Ansett, which owned Channel Zero.

After this there was only one place that Murdoch's money could go and early this month stock exchange operators picked up some stirrings in the *Herald* and *Weekly Times* share price. Frightened that his plans might have leaked out, on Tuesday morning this week (20 November), Murdoch strolled into the offices of the *Herald* and *Weekly Times* and told its chairman Keith McPherson, an extremely grey accountant who has been with the company since 1938, that he was going to make a bid for half the shares in the group.

For the next 48 hours a consortium dubbed the 'Friends of the Herald' rallied against the man who used to be called the Young Master. The 'friends', of course, were by no means a group of community do-gooders, but a purposeful consortium of some of the mightiest financial and political interests in the country. At the beginning of the fight the *Herald* and *Weekly Times* controlled about 23 per cent of the shares directly and through other companies in the same group. They ended up with more than 37 per cent, and egg all over their faces.


Rag doll Ruperta returns
★ Lovely, much-travelled Ruperta Mudroch is back on home ground again, basking in the sun and fostering her taste for Aussie beer. She makes a clean breast of her love for her native country, and is prepared to carry the can in any argument on the merits of Australian beer.
★ Curvy Ruperta has an unusual hobby: collecting rags. "I love my rags," she smiles "but some people are very rude about them." Let's hope that even if her collection has a lot of knockers, it heralds rags to riches for Ruperta.
★ "Why am I here in Melbourne? I've always dreamed about walking into my home town and buying a local paper."

The consortium was led by a member company of the group, Queensland Newspapers – its chairman, Reg Leonard, is at 72 one of the only two surviving Keith Murdoch protégés. (It was he who gave Rupert the sternest public tongue-lashing.) The most interesting 'friend' was John Fairfax and Sons, the Sydney-based media group and the other member of Australia's big three media companies, apart from the two contenders.

Fairfax bought the biggest institutional shareholding held by the life assurance giant Australian Mutual Provident Society: this was a holding Murdoch had told people he was sure to get and, if he had succeeded, would have started a stampede in his favour. Fairfax took the 3.7 per cent shareholding for between $A12 and $A13 million: the sellers had cannily inserted an 'escalation' clause so that the price rose with the stock exchange price. The deal was made easier as the chairman of the AMP was Sir Vincent Fairfax.

Fairfax also admitted to spending a further $A50 million buying the *Herald* shares. T & G Insurance, with which the *Herald* group has close links, was suspected to be helping. Behind it all was the National Bank with its traditional ties and shared directors. United, the Sydney and Melbourne establishment presented a formidable challenge.

While he was losing the battle in the stock market things were going wrong politically for Murdoch. On Tuesday morning, the same day as he visited the *Herald* offices, Murdoch had gone to see the Victorian premier Mr Hamer, as a matter of courtesy, he said. Hamer had not – apparently – opposed the bid.

However, next morning the newspapers were full of inspired reports of the concern of the Liberal Country Party ministers about the freedom of the press. To an outsider, given the fact that an attack on Murdoch can bring the crowd to its feet at any Labour meeting in Australia, Tory coolness is perhaps surprising. However, the Conservatives will never forget his support for Labour in 1972.

Malcolm Fraser, the man who in opposition would upbraid businessmen if they went on a Labour government committee of inquiry, is not a man who forgives. The deputy prime minister had his own grudge: years ago Murdoch favoured a rival for leadership. Finally, Fraser owed a big debt to the *Herald*, as they were the first paper to support him when he turned against Whitlam in 1975.

The Trade Practices Commissioner is an independent public servant in charge of a body with largely untested powers over monopoly: but he can scarcely have been ignorant of the climate of concern in Canberra. On Wednesday morning the TPC asked Murdoch to stop buying shares for one month, pending an urgent examination. Although Murdoch could have resisted this – there is plenty of legal opinion that the TPC would not stand up in the High Court – it was a convenient way out considering that he was losing the battle. However, Murdoch saw the scope for snatching victory, of sorts, from this defeat and also bloodying some noses.

The man in charge of the *Herald*'s stock market operation was Bill Richmond, senior partner in Potters, *Herald*'s stockbrokers. At 11 a.m. on the third day of the offer a known stock exchange operator offered a parcel of one million shares in the *Herald*. After fierce bidding with the Murdoch forces, Richmond bid them up to $A552 and won. In the next 17 minutes Richmond bought another 1.5 million shares from the same broker, May and Mullins, a firm without any previous connection with Murdoch. Each time he outbid the Murdoch brokers there were some suspicions but the competition was too frenetic to allow any risk. By 11.17 the purchases looked like a considerable coup for the Melbourne *Herald* defence, which had kept its nerve under pressure. But they had been had. By then Murdoch had decided to pull out and was selling his shares through a dummy broker, netting himself a profit variously estimated at up to $A6 million. The 'Friends of the Herald' had splashed out $A70 million to end up with a paper loss of $A20 million, though their 40 per cent holding puts them in an almost impregnable position if Murdoch tries again.

This provides enough media coverage for one issue. Back to the Pundits next week.

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Victory over Merseyside police for Yates family

Rob Rohrer writes: The Director of Public Prosecutions has unexpectedly abandoned all charges against a Prescot family accused of assaulting a Merseyside police officer from K Division – where Jimmy Kelly, the Huyton labourer, dies in custody five months ago. The officer has been suspended since the NEW STATESMAN's report of the incident (14 September 1979) and another outside police force – Leicestershire – has now been asked to send in senior officers to reinforce the West Midlands team already investigating the widespread complaints of brutality in K Division.

In the Prescot case, the Yates family were charged with assaulting traffic policeman Norman Wilcock. As the NEW STATESMAN revealed, a string of neighbours say they saw Harry Yates and his son Steven punched and repeatedly kicked by policemen. Mrs Betty Yates alleges she was kicked in the groin and spent four days in Whiston hospital.

Several weeks ago, the DPP offered to adjourn the assault charges *sine die*. The Yateses refused and now the DPP's office has backed down, completely dropping all charges. The family have been asked to co-operate fully with the West Midlands inquiry. Merseyside police will not say why Wilcock has been suspended. Wilcock has also been named in a civil action against Merseyside police which alleges extreme brutality by a number of K Division officers. Four years ago he was one of three policemen who arrested John Lannon, a 34-year-old building labourer, following a late night party. At the time the *Liverpool Free Press* traced about a dozen witnesses who said they saw Lannon kicked, beaten with a pick handle and dragged screaming along rough ground by the police and another civilian. Later at Walton hospital he underwent an operation for a punctured lung and was treated for a broken rib, facial injuries and severe bruising. A police inquiry resulted in the DPP announcing 'insufficient evidence' to prosecute any officer. Lannon has since died from a heart attack but his family are pursuing the civil action. Last week they won a small but significant victory when a Registrar ordered the police to disclose the investigating officer's report.

In recent weeks Huyton magistrates have been busy hearing the cases against those arrested during a police raid on the Huyton Park Hotel (NS 24 August), many of whom claim to have been beaten, punched and kicked by uniformed officers and detectives at Huyton police station. Three defendants have insisted that the police officers appearing against them were *not* the officers who had arrested them – and that they were seriously assaulted as they were arrested.

- David Howells – charged with being drunk and disorderly – says it was not P.C. Gary McGrath but a plain clothes officer who punched and arrested him. Howells was found guilty.
- Terence Roche, 17 – charged with being drunk and disorderly – is adamant that he has never before seen P.C. John Roberts, said to have been the arresting officer. Roche told the court: 'A policeman in plain clothes hit me in the face. He was a tall broad man with a moustache and he was wearing a leather jacket. I fell to the ground and he began kicking me saying: 'Have it your own way, son'. Another witness agreed he saw Roche arrested and punched by a plain clothes officer. Roche was found not guilty.
- Patricia Rogers, 24, was also charged with being drunk and disorderly. She insisted that P.C. Stanley Bode was not the officer who arrested her and kicked and punched her in the stomach. The arresting officer's number she maintains was 5319. She was found not guilty.

During the police evidence it emerged that a number of plain clothes officers had gone on the raid. P.C. Phillip Atherton admitted he had gone along in civilian clothes. But why some constables disguised as civilians were needed for a straightforward licensing raid was not explained to the court. One solicitor asked P.C. Davin whether he knew that a week before the raid a police car's windscreen had been smashed outside the pub, and whether the raid had been connected with this incident. Davin replied he knew nothing at all about the windscreen being smashed.

One person who was not before the magistrates was 16-year-old Mark Weston who, at a previous hearing, had been bound over to keep the peace. His family say this happened because they were unfamiliar with court procedures. Weston appears to have been the victim of an unprovoked attack from a senior police officer wielding a long night stick, according to a witness traced by the NEW STATESMAN. The same witness – a 26-year-old GEC draughtsman – saw other incidents outside the Huyton Park on that night and his statement supports the prevailing public view in the Huyton community that a squad of K Division officers was bent on violence against the pub's customers. He told the NEW STATESMAN:

> This big bloke, a policeman with braid on his hat and a long stick, grabbed Mark (Weston) off the wall and just dragged him away. He started whacking Mark as he was dragging him to the van. He was hitting him with the stick, across the back of his head and body. I'd say he hit him about four or five times. The policeman hitting him wasn't a sergeant. I didn't see any stripes. He had pips on his shoulder. He was big and grey-haired. The police were just accumulating people. Some people only asked the police 'What are you doing that for?' and they were arrested. I saw one bloke ask why his mate was being taken away and a big plain clothes fellow came up to him and punched him right in the face and said 'You'll do' (This appears to have been the arrest of either Howells or Roche). Two old blokes were standing watching when four policemen just dragged them off. You don't see that sort of thing every day.

The 'old blokes' were almost certainly Ned Rogers, 54, and his friend George McKewan. Both were found guilty of being drunk and disorderly.

Last week James Jardine, chairman of the Police Federation, described the public critics of the Merseyside police as the 'usual ragbag of people who spend their time sniping at the police service'. Far from discouraging the critics, this widely reported abuse has intensified local feelings that the present rift between police and public on Merseyside will not be mended without a far-reaching public inquiry into the policing of K Division.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Inside the Prague courtroom

Ten members of the Czech human rights movement, Charter 77, were put on trial for 'subversion of the Republic', as reported in the NEW STATESMAN (3 August 1979). Six have now been found guilty and sentenced. The cases against the remaining four have yet to be heard. Engineer Petr Uhl has been sent to prison for five years; playwright Vaclav Havel for four years; mathematician and philosopher Vaclav Benda for three years; and journalists Jiri Dienstbier and Ota Bednarova for three years. Psychologist Dana Nemcova received a two-year suspended sentence. This unique account of the proceedings, pieced together by some of the few friends and relatives who were allowed into the court, and reported by JAN KAVAN, is the first to be published in the West.

THE TRIAL OF THE SIX members of the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) was described by one of the defendants, Jiri Dienstbier, 42, a former well-known radio journalist, as the biggest political trial in Czechoslovakia for the past 25 years. It was conducted in conditions of tight security and secrecy: only 12 relatives of the accused were admitted to the courtroom throughout the 2-day hearing in the (specially selected) smallest room of the Prague Municipal Court. When Anna Sabatova, the wife of the main defendant Petr Uhl, 38, maintained that she had the right to take notes during a public trial, she was expelled from the court and spent the next 39 hours in a police cell. Other relatives were searched thoroughly every time they left the court building. Despite all this, a thorough account of the trial has just reached the West.

This remarkable document proves beyond doubt that the trial violated not only the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights which Czechoslovakia ratified in 1976, but also Czechoslovakia's own Penal Code. For a start, none of the important preconditions for the activity of the accused to even be considered as criminal under Article 98 (Subversion of the Republic) has been fulfilled. The article clearly stipulates that subversion can only be committed out of hostility to the socialist system of the Republic. This hostility must be first proven. As with the other preconditions, the indictment simply asserts it, defence lawyers did not dare to question it and so it was left to the defendants themselves to dispute it.

Jiri Dienstbier was able to reject the accusation: 'I consider it absurd to accuse me of being hostile to socialism. I come from a Communist family of doctors, I worked actively in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and as a reporter and commentator on foreign affairs on the radio. I am a convinced socialist and you cannot find anything other than a socialist point of view in my private or public utterances or articles.'

The judge interrupted him: 'Your speech must be relevant to the criminal case under investigation.'

Dienstbier: 'If I have to express my opinion as concisely as possible, I will use universally known sentences from the Communist Manifesto. There Marx and Engels characterise socialism as a society in which the free development of the individual is the precondition for the free development of all. The function of a socialist state is to create the conditions for this free development. It is necessary to struggle ceaselessly for this true essence of socialism . . .'

The judge interrupts again: 'The court is not concerned with theories, but facts . . .'

Dienstbier: 'I will say it thus. Society cannot be healthy while individuals in power prevent other citizens from taking up an active stance, and this leads to a fatalistic, directly antisocialist conception of society . . .'

Like the human rights movement Charter 77, the VONS committee is politically a very heteregeneous body. The repressive nature of

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The Czech 6 (from left to right): Bednarova, Benda, Dienstbier, Havel, Nemcova, Uhl

Palach Press

the present Czech regime makes such unity possible. Uhl is a Trotskyist, Dienstbier a reformist Communist, Benda a democrat, stressing his Catholicism. None of them is anti-socialist, but all are content with the socialist system and some have a long history of struggle for socialist ideals.

The indictment also simply stated that VONS was an anti-state organisation. Again no evidence was offered although the allegation is crucial because if VONS is not an anti-state body, the methods by which its statements were distributed – a question which was discussed at length during the trial – is irrelevant. Vaclav Havel, an internationally known playwright attempted to draw the judge's attention to the fallacy of this argument: 'The system is based on the *a priori* assumption that state organs can never act unjustly. A court decision is considered infallible . . . this assumption is very dangerous. Anyone who questions it is automatically considered an enemy and his whole behaviour is qualified as hostile. From the point of view of the prosecutor, if the State organs cannot make a mistake, then criticism of their activity can logically be construed as slander, vilification and so on. And why would anyone slander them? Obviously from hostility, and if from hostility, then obviously in conjunction with hostile foreign anti-socialist forces.' After the judge's interruption Havel continued: 'The prosecution does not talk about the main thing, the contents of VONS statements . . . If the prosecution conceded an analysis of the contents, it would, in fact, have admitted its own fallibility . . . You see, the statements only give the basic facts, cite documents, and give the concrete activity for which people have been prosecuted. If you write that high-school student XY copied an article by Vaclav Havel and gave it to his fellow pupil to read, it doesn't sound nearly so frightening as if you write that Student XY reproduced and distributed in an illegal manner an anti-state pamphlet by a right-wing exponent . . . There are certain words which recur continually in the indictment, which one would characterise as harsh; for instance subversion, lies, malice, illegal organisation, anti-communist centres, vilification, hatred, and so on. When, however, we look behind these words we can see there is nothing behind them. If these words were replaced by their more sober equivalents, there would be absolutely nothing left of the indictment . . .'

Ota Bednarova, 52, former well known television journalist, lately cleaner, refused to testify during the pre-trial interrogations and also refused to testify at the trial because she rejected the indictment and the entire criminal proceedings on the grounds that the activity of VONS was not based on any hostility. The question of motivation was the only one she wanted to be heard on. The judge didn't allow this on the first day of the trial and so Bednarova tried again when exercising her right to a final speech: 'I am 52 years old and I would like somehow to come to terms with that part of my life when I was silent because I was too young . . .'

At this point the judge tried to silence Ota Bednarova and so they are both speaking at once.: 'That does not belong here, Mrs Bednarova.'

Bednarova: 'But I am in VONS precisely because I have recognised the monstrosity of sentences which have sometimes led to executions. The attempt to prevent anything like that ever happening again has become the content of my life. I simply cannot live otherwise, however much it costs me . . .'

The judge did not allow her to continue and also refused to enter her words in the protocol of the trial.

On Wednesday 28 November, another VONS member, Albert Cerny, 42, former actor, lately Red Cross driver, received three and a half years for subversion of the Republic. The indictment stressed his 'membership in the anti-socialist organisation VONS'. Four other VONS members are still in detention in Prague awaiting their trial. The appeal of the six convicted members will probably be heard by the Supreme Court in the New Year. Some of their relatives feel that the protests in the West prevented the almost 10-year sentences asked for by the public prosecutor. It can only be hoped that the campaign in the West will not now wither away and allow the prosecutor to have his way at the appeal trial but that on the contrary the violations of law will be pointed out so forcefully that the Supreme Court will feel the need to reduce the sentences if not to quash them altogether.

"Philosophy in small doses"

In the Times Higher Education Supplement this week, Anthony Quinton, President of Trinity College, Oxford, launches a major new series of articles on academic journals.
"..the dialectical exchanges in which the life and progress of philosophy are to be found can be carried on, like postal chess, at a distance, through the medium of the philosophical periodical."
Quinton's contribution, the first of many by a host of distinguished authors exploring the state of periodical publishing discipline by discipline, discusses the health of philosophical journals.
Also in this week's paper:
A Profile of F.A. Hayek.
Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones on violence in America.

This week

THE TIMES
Higher Education
SUPPLEMENT

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LABOUR
Jim MacFarlane and Andrew Taylor

What's behind the current battle between Arthur Scargill and his MP?

Yorkshire miners gun for Mason

BARNSLEY, PROVISIONAL capital of the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire and home town of the National Union of Mineworkers (Yorkshire Area), is in the throes of revolution. The Barnsley Labour Party and its MP Roy Mason, long-time bastion of political moderation, is under attack from Arthur Scargill, President of the Yorkshire NUM, and Jack Brown, Chairman of Barnsley Trades Council. In many press reports we are led to believe that the disagreement is of recent origins and directly associated with the current conflict between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the National Executive Committee. The truth is that while some of the issues may be similar, the root causes of the political upheaval in Barnsley are more complex.

Barnsley has had a Labour MP since 1922, with only a short break in the early 1930s, and its present Member has held the seat for more than 25 years, since March 1953. In the May general election Roy Mason's majority was the sixth highest Labour majority in the whole of the United Kingdom. Three out of the five parliamentary constituencies achieving higher Labour majorities than Barnsley were in neighbouring parts of the Yorkshire coalfield (Hemsworth, Rother Valley, Dearne Valley) and only one parliamentary constituency within the boundaries of South Yorkshire failed to return a Labour member.

Barnsley parliamentary constituency, like Dearne Valley, Hemsworth, Don Valley and Normanton, is regarded as a Yorkshire 'miners' seat'. There have been four Barnsley Labour MPs since 1922 and all four were NUM-sponsored candidates. Under Rule 67 of its constitution, the NUM (Yorkshire Area) has a short-list of potential Parliamentary Candidates from which it, the union, selects the NUM candidate to contest the selection conference of the Constituency Labour Party. This preliminary selection conference held by the union ensures that only one NUM nomination goes forward to the Constituency Selection Conference – thus preventing a split in the NUM vote.

Now when Roy Mason won the Barnsley nomination in 1953 he was a 28-year old fitter employed at the local Wharncliffe Woodmoor Colliery. In the normal course of events Roy Mason might have waited a very long time for the opportunity to contest a safe Labour seat as an official NUM-sponsored candidate but it was his good fortune that the parliamentary vacancy was in his home constituency and he had the support of full-time NUM officials. On the face of things he could not have been the favourite to win the union nomination. There were three well-established candidates higher placed on the NUM Parliamentary List, but the support of local branches and the NUM leadership proved decisive.

Trade union sponsorship is an important political asset but NUM sponsorship had special advantages for Mason. The concentration of miners within the coalfields provides a bonus of political muscle available to few other occupational groups. In 1953 the General Secretary of the NUM (Yorkshire Area) circularised the relevant branches of the Union urging support for Roy Mason at the Labour Selection Conference:

> The failure of any one of our delegates to attend the Conference may jeopardise the selection of our candidate (and the branches were) to take all possible steps to win support from other organisations for our candidate.

On 16 February 1953, the delegates to the Barnsley Labour Party selection conference were faced with a straight choice between two candidates: Mason and Alderman A. E. McVie, full-time organiser for the shopworkers union, Secretary/Agent of the Barnsley District Labour Party, the 'Mr Barnsley' of local government. The result of the selection ballot was: R. Mason 138 votes, A. E. McVie 111 votes. With a possible 99 votes out of his total of 138 votes coming from miners' delegates, the support of the NUM was essential to Mason's success.

Roy Mason (left) and Arthur Scargill

ROY MASON was elected MP in 1953 and has since successfully defended the seat in eight elections. He made small political ripples on the twin issues of MP's salaries (a sort of parliamentary shop steward role) and demanding the landscaping of pit spoil heaps. He has held office in every Labour government since his election, from Minister of State, Board of Trade, in 1964-67, to Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. In the same period he has earned a reputation as a good constituency MP from both friend and foe and still lives in his constituency.

But this is not the first time he has been at odds with the views of Party activists: on issues from German re-armament and the Bomb, to Clause 4 and the Common Market he has disagreed with them. This last issue particularly angered the miners (already not entirely pleased at his support for nuclear power at a time when redundancy was rife in the coal industry). When Heath took Britain into the EEC in 1971 Roy Mason was one of the group of Labour members who ignored Party policy to oppose the entry and abstained in the Commons vote on the issue. In the 1975 referendum campaign his views were openly of the 'Yes' variety against both Party and NUM policy. This pro-EEC stance so angered the miners that they passed a resolution making it clear that the Yorkshire area did not want miners' MPs accepting the privilege of sponsorship and then demanding the luxury of independence from union policy. It was resolved with the support of 73 of the 76 NUM delegates to the Yorkshire area council that no miner-sponsored MP should vote or speak on policy which affected the coal mining industry, nor was he to campaign or work against union policy on any major issue. Outraged MPs and the Committee of Privileges found this a major breach of privilege. The NUM national executive repudiated the Yorkshire area and the matter was dropped unresolved.

But it came up again when Mason wrote a letter to the *Star*, the local evening newspaper, which blamed the unions for losing the election. This so angered the chairman of Barnsley Trades Council, county councillor Jack Brown, that he got his Monk Bretton Labour Party branch to pass a resolution: 'This constituency Labour Party dissociates itself from the political attitudes of its MP'. This resolution would probably have been defeated: but attendance at the meeting on 31 August nearly doubled, with many of the delegates from the NUM. A heated debate ensued, which was finally resolved by an amendment to delete the words 'its MP' and substitute 'any MP who does not adhere to the party constitution and annual conference decisions'. The amended resolution was carried by the overwhelming majority of 90 votes to two and the source of this compromise proposal was Arthur Scargill, delegate to the Barnsley GMC from Woolley Colliery Branch of the NUM — his previous workplace.

On 27 September there was a special meeting of the Barnsley Labour Party GMC to mandate the delegate to annual conference. The Party establishment suffered a further humiliation when it was decided to support all three of the Labour NEC proposals for constitutional reforms to democratise the Party. Delegates from the miners' branches were again strongly in evidence. They had previously attended a miners' caucus meeting and decided to support the Yorkshire Area policy in favour of the constitutional changes. Under NUM(YA) Rules these delegates were entitled to expenses for loss of earnings to attend to NUM business and the caucus meeting qualified for this financial allowance – a factor which doubtless ensured a healthy attendance. This financial arrangement so angered Councillor Ron Fisher, Chairman of the Barnsley Party and supporter of the 'moderate' line, that he called the NUM delegates to the Special GMC 'political prostitutes'.

On 8 October the Yorkshire NUM replied by deciding to support any demand for Fisher's resignation. Two days later the Worsborough Labour Party Members Branch moved a vote of no confidence in the Barnsley Party chairman and called upon him to resign. Arthur Scargill, a member of the Worsborough Party, attended this meeting along with his wife. But in a strongly mining area – not a little puritan in its use of language – many ordinary members had been outraged by the terms used. At the normal bi-monthly meeting of the Barnsley Party on 26 October – well attended by delegates from the NUM and the T&GWU – the Worsborough resolution was passed by 59 votes to 34. So far Councillor Fisher has remained silent and given no intimation of his intentions. But Norman West, who seconded the successful no confidence resolution, has said: 'Whether Councillor Fisher stays is for him to say, but if he does it will be bad for him and even worse for the party. It was unfortunate that the motion had to be put, but it was inevitable after Councillor Fisher's vile claim that the

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NUM delegates were political prostitutes.'

Mason remains unabashed. Within hours he had returned to the political offensive and openly challenged the majority view on the question of constitutional reforms. The battle is far from over. He is a tough-minded politician unlikely to concede the initiative without an all-out fight and his supporters are busy organising a counter-offensive against the Left in the Barnsley constituency.

Roy Mason can't complain if the Yorkshire miners continue to fight. If they hadn't fought for him in the Selection Conference of 1953 he might never have seen the inside of the House of Commons. The essential difference is that the political muscle was right-handed then – it now swings with an equally powerful left.

IMMIGRATION
Pat Wheeler

Thatcher's policies coincide with plans to curb non-white entry to the EEC

Europe's white laager

TIMED TO COINCIDE with the Westminster debate on the Government's immigration White Paper is a Common Market proposal to curb immigration to all EEC countries, due for discussion in the European Parliament next month. Last March, the Brussels Commission proposed in a bland document, *Consultation on Migration Policies vis-à-vis Third Countries*, that the immigration authorities of the Nine should meet regularly under Commission auspices to review the various national rules on the entry of 'third country nationals', ie, those not possessing automatic right of abode in any EEC country. Among the immigrants coming under EEC scrutiny would be all Commonwealth entrants to Britain not covered by the patriality definition of the 1971 Act, plus about three-quarters of the 'migrant worker' population of Western Europe, most of whom have come in under temporary bilateral arrangements with France and Germany. The Commission is worried that, with six million unemployed in the EEC, and negotiations in progress to admit Greece, Portugal and Spain, thousands of Mediterranean workers could flood to northern Europe under the freedom of movement provisions of the Treaty of Rome. In the negotiations for Greek entry, Greek workers have been barred from enjoying freedom of movement for the first seven years.

The Brussels 'white paper' has already had a favourable reaction from the EEC's own Economic and Social Committee, a highly conservative 144-member body representing employers, unions and miscellaneous economic pressure groups in the Nine. But the opinions of that Committee cut no real ice as far as Brussels is concerned, nor do the views of the European Parliament. Real power is vested in the intergovernmental apparatus of the Council of Ministers, which will decide on the immigration proposal at the end of this month.

The proposal is a disguised attempt to harmonise immigration law throughout the Nine for the greater good of 'Europe', though the Commission vigorously denies that this is what it is trying to do. Its senior labour market officials say that the only purpose of the intergovernmental meetings of immigration authorities will be to explore possible areas of agreement in the admission of non-EEC nationals and their dependents; enforceable rules will only follow if the member countries want them. Nobody should be fooled by this. The Commission works to a political programme enshrined in the various EEC summit meetings. The Paris summit of December 1974 called for an eventual European Passport Union, and for 'stage-by-stage harmonisation of legislation affecting aliens'. The present Commission document replaces the word '*harmonisation*' by '*consultation*', although the word used in all the other language versions means joint policy-making. The linguistic compromise dates back to February 1976, when 'consultation' on the admission of aliens also appeared in a benign sounding Action Programme for migrants adopted by the Council, as a translation of the French '*concertation*'. This ploy, for which Brussels denies responsibility, must presumably be laid at the door of Harold Wilson's then Government, as the English-speaking party to the negotiations. Whoever was so anxious to spare UK sensibilities on the subject of immigration also set in motion a process by which immigration policy is gradually passing to the EEC. Already, for two years, the Commission has been trying to get through a Directive which would place the onus for detecting unauthorised immigrant labour on employers. To be implemented in the UK, it would require police checks on workplaces, or identity cards for immigrants, or both.

Andrew Wiard (Report)

Thousands marched through London on Sunday against racist immigration laws proposed by the Thatcher government, which fall neatly into line with current manoeuvres to restrict non-white immigration throughout the Common Market.

IN FACT, THE EEC has no legal powers whatever to control immigration from non-member countries. Under the Treaty, all it can do is to promote freedom of movement for EEC nationals from one member country to another. Its Advisory Committee on freedom of movement, assisted by a technical committee of civil servants from the Nine's Ministries of Labour, monitors the application of the rules to ensure that no obstacles are placed in the way of EEC nationals wanting to cross frontiers to take work in another country. These committees operate under the 10 EEC legislative instruments which amplify the Treaty's freedom of movement clauses. The Commission is now claiming that one of these, Regulation 1612 of 1968, allows them to deal with immigration from outside the EEC. Its paper says 'the rules and procedures provided by Regulation 1612/68, particularly Article 19, are sufficiently flexible and applicable to deal with the problem'. But the Commission's claim is devoid of all legal foundation. Article 19 of the regulation merely allows member countries and the Commission to vet the number of job-placements of nationals from non-EEC countries to ensure that priority is given to EEC nationals. The only category of UK entrants covered by the rule are work-permit holders, already being cut back by the Conservatives. Nothing in the regulation actually allows the control of entry of dependents or the vetting of immigration for reasons other than employment. Yet the Commission's paper implies definite plans to encroach on the entry of dependants. One of the areas on which it is calling for 'immediate consultation' is 'the policy concerning family reunification in the host countries'. Another is 'the policy concerning return home of migrants'.

The crux of the matter is that Western Europe's vast numbers of migrant workers – with families, they total 11-12 million – were sucked in to service the economic boom of the 1960's, and are now expendable. They are increasingly expensive to keep, with the broadening scope of social security systems; their living conditions are an embarrassment to governments which like to claim a progressive record; and there is considerable electoral mileage to be got out of indigenous populations by ejecting them. This is especially true of West Germany, which is the prime mover behind the Brussels bid for immigration control. Warmly supported by the ultra-conservative Trade Union Confederation, it got rid of about 800,000 of its immigrant workers between 1974 and 1977 by cutting off benefits, except for repatriation grants, to those who lost their jobs in the recession.

The French froze all immigration by decree in 1974, and tried to cut off the entry of dependents altogether three years later. A battle by constitutionalists succeeded in getting these steps declared illegal at the end of last year, when the government retaliated by drafting new legislation to withdraw work permits from all foreigners unemployed for more than six months, and to legalise the arbitrary arrest and detention of foreigners refused a work permit. The French plan is to get rid of 200,000 of the existing immigrant population each year. Most of them are from the North African ex-colonies, and are non-white. New Dutch legislation forbids the employment of foreign workers unless no local labour is available. In Belgium, the admission of dependents is governed by a confidential instruction issued in November 1977, and is discretionary; those most frequently refused entry are Moroccans. A new Foreigners' Statute, now in draft form, aims to tighten up the conditions of entry and residence for all non-EEC nationals. Except for France, which is sensitive to the EEC trespassing on its sovereignty, all the continental EEC countries are anxious for the Directive on illegal immigration and employment to go through – the biggest possible incentive to employers to take on only white labour.

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Washington Diary

☐ It was an extraordinary sight, the first Iranian demonstration through Washington on behalf of the Ayatollah. Flanking the column of 1,000 Iranians, five abreast, which snaked around one and half city blocks, were twice as many police, symmetrically arrayed like a formal cutlery service; a row of foot police on either side of the demonstrators, then a row of motorcycle men, squad cars on one side and horsemen on the other. At the tail of the procession Iranian women pushing strollers were followed by more motorised surveillance technology than I've ever seen on display at a Washington civic event like this – radar trucks, telephone trucks, mobile command posts, paddy wagons, ambulances, even the city mayor. It would have been possible, no doubt, for one of the women in chadors to fall back in line, knock on one of the wagons, and have a Cheerio call put through to Qom.

Chief among those hectoring the Iranians were gangs of students from George Washington University, an expensive private school which has been subsidised for several years by endowment money and student grants from the Shah. The university students have been involved in the increasing intimidation of Iranians – and of Arabs, since Americans have always had difficulty comprehending the difference. The police were jubilant this week, according to one of the local radio stations, when they netted an Iranian jaywalker whose student visa had expired. He is likely to be one of the few students deported, since the Attorney-General's orders to tighten up visa enforcement and run the offending Iranians out of town have been rescinded for their unconstitutional vagueness.

☐ Had Pope John Paul come here just a little later, he might have been able to officiate at the launching of a new crusade against the infidels, for that is how potent the feeling against Moslems has become. Even George Ball, a former Under Secretary of State and erstwhile moderate on Middle Eastern issues, declaimed in the *Washington Post* against religious fanatics who 'have destroyed freedom and placed stifling shackles on the boldest and noblest minds'. On his benighted list even poor Oliver Cromwell took a place beside the Ayatollah. Perhaps, as they steam towards the Gulf and await their orders, American carrier crews are painting a legion of forgotten names on their aircraft, as was their habit during wartime. One can imagine F4s and F-14s streaking over the Iranian oil fields or into Tehran bearing the names of Charles I, Louis XVI, Franz Ferdinand, and Nicholas II.

☐ The fanaticism of Dr Brzezinski should not be underestimated in these matters. There have always been bitter, private recriminations against him in the State Department and in the White House itself. Brzezinski is widely blamed for the fruitless confrontation with Cuba over the Soviet brigade in September, and for earlier efforts this year at intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

This year too, the Office of Management and Budget commissioned a study of the administration's National Security policymaking by Philip Odeen, a former National Security Council staff member. Odeen's unreleased report sharply criticises Brzezinski's handling of foreign policy crises, and recommends a series of bureaucratic changes which would break the alliance that Brzezinski has apparently fashioned between himself and the joint Chiefs of Staff. This link was identified by Odeen as consistently tilting the advice reaching the President in favour of military intervention and shows of force. Odeen suggests, for example, putting the State Department in more effective charge of contingency planning for global flashpoints, particularly the Middle East. He also recommends replacing Brzezinski as chairman of the senior-level crisis management groups which assemble to deal with problems once they get out of American control. This is not the first time Carter has been warned privately that Brzezinski has been misleading him, but dangerous as Brzezinski's half-cocked schemes may be on this occasion, they may be too far gone for the President to find a face-saving way of extricating himself.

☐ I have been having some trouble with my birdbox lately. The early snow we had a month ago led the squirrels into a tiz of last-minute provisioning. In their frenzy, they tore the roof off the birdbox, with the result that it doesn't hold its seed long enough for the birds to get their share. With a shortage of birdseed (which is not counted in the cost-of-living index and so I fear a bout of price gouging) I hadn't been able to attract the usual denizens of my garden. You can imagine my pleasure therefore at sighting last Wednesday, after a week's absence, the blue jay and his son. What a coincidence to find the very same day, on opening up the *New York Times*, that other jay chirping from the page. For a Jay, Peter has an unusual contrapuntal aspect to his economic tune. On the one hand, there is celebration for President Carter, who 'had little choice but to freeze the Iranian government's assets'. On the other hand, there are more discordant notes: 'The risk of a banking crisis as a result of the withdrawal of Iran's $8 billion was minimal': and 'the risk of an alarming drop in the value of the dollar . . . was also small'. Then, with a sparkle of double negative hypotheticals so reminiscent of his old singing voice, came this inspiration: what if other dollars holders in the Middle East draw the 'wrong conclusions'?

Alas, the song ended without answer, but the Treasury Secretary's unseemly rush to Riyadh on Friday was evocative enough. The fact that has escaped Mr Jay and most Americans at the moment is that not a single Arab state has supported the freeze. More significant perhaps, America's few Arab friends – Arabia, the Emirates, Jordan and Tunisia – have each pointedly condemned the action, and their press is recommending putting investments elsewhere.

☐ Since my last diary entry on the virulent venereal condition of the District of Columbia, kindly informants hastened to send me lists of the more violent and morbid symptoms of the area's lubricity. Take, for example, the recently reported case of a nineteen-year old woman at a small college in nearby Maryland. It appears that in mid-September the woman went uninvited to a house occupied by several members of the college's wrestling team. A witness is quoted as saying that she went to the bedroom, took off her clothes, and 'demanded sexual partners'. 'The rule was you had to take off your clothes to get into the bedroom. There were as many as 15 guys in the room at a time. People were double-parked out in front of the house. There were guys out there directing traffic.' Local news reporters estimate that perhaps as many as 100 males had intercourse in these circumstances.

There are several nasty aspects to this story. In the first place, if the woman was forced, the Maryland law has recently been revised to be unavailing for a rape prosecution. The courts now insist on considerable internal physical damage as corroboration of a rape complaint. If, on the other hand, the young woman displayed an appetite for all of her partners, she is likely to face certification and treatment to shock her back to sanity. A veritable Lilith in that case, she has apparently stirred in the townspeople a little-recognised American fear of the female libido.

☐ By way of anthropological contrast, I recall being told by Chinese relatives that the warriors of ancient China used to prepare for battle by consuming potions of women's pubic hair. The point has stuck in my mind that those men thought strength and good fortune were associated with Venus and her nether covering. Americans, whose warriors can still be recognized by the fact that their hair is almost shaved off, have an opposite and abject fear of women's potency. The culture's underside is thus filled with violent fantasies of vengeance and rape. Who can forget the climactic episode of Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, when Temple Drake, the epitome of southern womanhood, is raped by Popeye with a corn cob?And that reminds me: a Californian court has just convicted and imprisoned its first Popeye – the laws of the State having only recently been changed to make 'rape by instrument' a crime more serious than aggravated assault. In most states, as in this area, Popeye still gets off with a good behaviour bond, while in Washington his victims are soon to be deprived even of rape counselling. The Mayor has cut the budget of the local rape crisis centre.

☐ While the economic indicators retch in contradictory motion up and down, the leisured class knows for certain that we are in a depression. The reason is that Saks, Fifth Avenue and other expensive stores have never before launched into 30-per-cent-off sales before Thanksgiving. At Neiman-Marcus here, the summer sale didn't clear the old *couture* stock, and the Jean Muirs are still hanging, limp and silky witnesses to the state the country is in.

Claudia Wright

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Mick the mongrel is to stay in his own three-bedroomed council house at Wolverhampton. The dog has been living alone in the house for the past three years. He is the pet of 83-year-old Mr George Chapman, who was involved in a road accident in 1976 and has been living with his daughter. But councillors unanimously agreed that he should retain tenancy of the property. – *Guardian* (Mrs J. Legge)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

When the bombs fall

From Professor J. H. Fremlin

It was with enormous regret that I saw the first sentence of the letter in your issue of 19 October by Fenner Brockway et al., appealing with a strong sense of urgency for early and extensive disarmament. With every other part of the letter I am in complete agreement but the first sentence in which they claim that it is accepted that existing weapons could destroy all life on this planet is plain untrue.

A letter which starts with an untruth, however well meaning, is likely to lead to the discounting of the letter as a whole by the small but important number of senior technologists whose influence quite outweighs their numerical strength. In a similar way before the last War, statements by Professor Joad exaggerating the effects of explosive bombs by several thousand times confined the effect of his letters strictly to those who had no knowledge of the real facts. Even if the total nuclear bomb stocks now available in the world were distributed by an experienced crop-spraying agency with the specific design of destroying as much life as possible, it would be entirely impossible to destroy all life, or even all humans, in view of the uncertain distribution of explosive thermal and radiation effects of the explosions themselves and the highly unpredictable dependence on local weather conditions of the distribution of radioactive materials.

Is is not enough of an incentive to point out that Europe and the more populated parts of North America, USSR and China would have more destruction both of property and of life than could be repaired with our *existing* resources in two generations, and which would be absolutely unrepairable by the few, disorganised and mostly starving survivors?

In any practical war a lot of bombs would not go off or would go off in the same places as had already been destroyed several times already, so that there would probably be quite a lot of survivors even in Europe. Not even the level of civilisation achieved by the Middle Ages would be possible over considerable areas and if the forms of government were as efficient and humane as those operating in Europe in the Dark Ages we would be fortunate. The fact that in 2-3 generations we might well be re-colonised and re-civilised from Patagonia or some other area relatively untouched would be of little interest to those of us whose children and grandchildren would have no hope of a satisfactory life even if they had any lives at all.

Department of Physics, Birmingham University

Scandal of St Matthew's

From J. Pealing, District Nursing Officer, South-East Staffordshire

Howard Sharron's recent article on St Matthew's Hospital (NS 2 November) does little credit to responsible journalism. The sensational approach to the General Nursing Council's educational report (not highly confidential but received 'in confidence' for full and open discussion by all concerned with nurse training) was a complete travesty of the facts.

The Council's report did not give a 'horrifying picture of conditions inside (the hospital)', nor claim 'that patients' lives were endangered through systematic abuse of medical standards'. The report discussed aspects of nurse education which are in process of further discussion by medical staff, service nurses and nurse tutors. Some of the points made will be accepted as sound advice, others may not be, as is always the case in these routine inspection reports.

I consider that Howard Sharron made little effort to check his facts before rushing into print. True he contacted me by 'phone late one Friday afternoon, when I was naturally very reluctant to discuss the Council's report over the telephone with someone about whom I had no means of ascertaining his bona fide. I did, however, provide him with the name of the chairman of the Medical Committee so that he could see him about the medical aspects of the report. I also went to some trouble to arrange for Mr Sharron to speak to the Divisional Nursing Officer, Mr M. McGovern, who has had a long association with the hospital. In addition, I also offered to arrange for Mr Sharron to visit St Matthew's Hospital and see the wards and speak to anyone he wished to. He did not take up any of these offers.

Because Mr Sharron quoted to me extracts from the General Nursing Council report, I did explain to him what the extracts actually meant. In the event I need not have bothered as he completely misquoted me, or quoted me in an inappropriate context. For example, I informed him that we already had one In-Service Training Nursing Officer and are in the process of appointing another. We have in fact a well-established in-service training programme and do not take untrained staff straight from the dole queue as Howard Sharron alleges or 'intend to introduce an in-service training scheme sometime in the future'.

On the drug question – I stated that no drugs are given without a doctor's prescription, administered in any improper manner and that the PRN prescriptions disliked by the inspector were normal practice in all hospitals, not that we 'operate a system called PRN' as if that was something different to normal practice.

I could continue to counter point by point the inaccuracies and half-truths of the article, but this would be tedious. However, two brief points to further illustrate the incorrect assumptions of the article – 'in one side room the possessions were on the floor covered by a large cloth' actually refers to one patient who insists that his possessions are kept in three suitcases on the floor in his room. All other patients keep their possessions in lockers and wardrobes. 'All attempts to make changes from within have been stifled by the hospital's conservative and authoritarian administration.' Your unnamed complainants have neither approached Mr McGovern or myself, both of us maintain an open-door policy for all staff. I always inform each new school that they have the right to see me direct on any subject if they are unable to sort out problems locally.

Although we still seek to further improve St Matthew's Hospital, we are proud of our achievements so far in improving standards of patient care. In 1974 we had a nurse patient ratio of 37.0 per 100 occupied beds, today that ratio is 48.78 per 100 occupied beds and it is our stated policy to continue to improve on that. During the same period we have modernised ten wards with a further two currently being done at a total capital cost of over £1,000,000.

Your article has done great harm to one of the most vulnerable sections of society, causing worry and distress to patients and their relatives. Some patients are showing reluctance to seek treatment after your article was reported locally. No doubt too, great harm will have been done to the future recruitment of nurses and other staff, deterred from seeking employment at St Matthew's Hospital by your article, thereby further hindering our efforts to make St Matthew's Hospital an even better place than it is.

Robert Bewick House, Burton District Hospital Centre, Belvedere Road, Burton-on-Trent

Marshall lore

From Bill Greenwell

With a pen as gladsome (the very word recalls those green, slightly-soiled hymnals of the obligatory public school morning services) as my heart, I offer news that will bring a becoming, if out-of-season, bloom to the already roseate cheeks of your correspondent, Arthur Marshall ('So glad to hear it, dear boy'), whose columns delight all and, to my knowledge, sundry. He remarks (NS 9 November) that he 'missed the Edwardian era by precisely four days'. Not so! The length of human gestation is approximately, and thank heavens for near-certainties in these unpredictable times, nine months (see *All The Questions You Wanted To Know About Sex, But Were Afraid To Ask*, a moderately-priced volume, despite the prolixity of its title, and to be unfair, the probable misuse of the verb 'know'), thus allowing Mr Marshall to feel safe in the knowledge that his lifespan covers the reigns of five, rather than four, monarchs, so far, and no disrespect intended to our present incumbent, long may she not yet pop off. While it is unwise to infer that his memory is at fault, his statement is. He may not recall his existence at the close of the Edwardian Era, but his mother, I feel sure ('It's kicking about again, my dear'), did.

1 Rose Cottage, The Beals, Woodbury, Near Exeter

Keep it quiet

From P. Rickard

I am sorry to read that Arthur Marshall (NS 16 November) has no idea what flower is represented in the badge of the Intelligence Corps, or what it stands for. Perhaps he did not do enough IA (Finding Out), or was frustrated by IB (Prevention of Finding Out). I hope I am not breaching the Official Secrets Act in revealing a) that the flower is a rose, and b) that the rose is connected with secrecy and confidentiality: *sub rosa*, 'under the rose' – in confidence, under pledge of secrecy. I even suspect that the true identity of the flower was perfectly well known to at least some of those outsiders who chose – no doubt motivated by sheer envy – to pretend that it was a pansy, and who spread the foul smear 'a pansy resting on its laurels'!

Emmanuel College, Cambridge

Screen hero

From Humphrey Swingler

Perhaps the critic's sting which really provoked the two professors (Letters 16 November) was John Coleman's reference, in his characteristically perceptive, abrasive and witty analysis of Richard Dyer's book *Stars* (NS 26 October), to film studies as a 'growth industry'. Come, come, Mr Coleman, you must surely realise that you were referring to an art form which has long since achieved the status of a university faculty, requiring 'proper theorisation'.

I am not alone in considering that the very high standard maintained by John Coleman's film reviews continues to enhance the reputation established by his predecessors in the NS over the last 30 years, and I'm surprised that you found these rather pathetic letters worthy of so much space.

79 Parkhill Road, London NW3

The London-Bath ellipse

From Howard Millbank

Next time Christopher Hitchens's pal dines with those elliptical types from the Treasury (London Diary, NS 16 November) maybe he will enquire more about the *axes* of the London-Bath ellipse. Most of the infinite number of possibilities are favourable to Bristol, but one would like to be sure. Personally I have always suspected a parabolic model: focus London, directrix an East-West line somewhere just north of Watford, and, to judge from our Common Market 'benefits', extending well into France.

21 Henlease Avenue, Bristol

Suffragette letters

From Jill Liddington

I am writing a biography of the suffragist Selina Cooper, to be published by Virago, and would be grateful to hear from any reader with information about her. Mrs Cooper (1864-1946) lived in Nelson in North East Lancashire. About two hundred and fifty of the letters written to her by socialist and feminist pioneers have survived; but unfortunately, apart from her suffrage diary and one or two political manifestos, little of her own writing is available. If any reader knows of the whereabouts of any correspondence *from* Selina Cooper, I would love to hear about it.

54 Miller Barn Lane, Waterfoot, Rossendale, Lancashire

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

On the avenue

Chatting on the subject here and there and now and again down the years to my fellow residents of the delightful Devon village of Appleton, I have discovered that not one of them has ever been what is known as a really ardent theatre-goer. Geography is partly responsible. To have been such a one, it is really necessary to have lived in, or to have been within easy striking distance of, London. Not but what a happy visit or two long ago did not sometimes include a theatre. Miss Entwhistle is nearly certain that she saw, during the first world war, *Chu Chin Chow*, but on the other hand she thinks that it may well have been *The Maid of the Mountains*. 'Was there a camel in it?' I asked, hot for certainties. 'Or, failing a camel, was there José Collins?' Alas, the mists of memory have closed round this exciting evening, obviously the high spot of Miss Entwhistle's dramatic experience. Pressed further, her information that the piece contained much tuneful music gets us nowhere, and since then her theatrical outings have been confined to visits to the wholly excellent 'Fol-De-Rol' concert parties (you could, as they say, take your aunt) when they used to come and brighten Torquay summers. But elsewhere I have found more accurate memories. Canon and Mrs Mountjoy were quite adventuresome. The Canon went, as a boy, to *The Farmer's Wife* ('I *roared*!') and on the evening of the day that they became engaged, the happy pair took in a merry musical called *Going Greek* ('We *shrieked*!'). And my Cousin Madge, London based for part of her life, can still quote some large and rib-tickling sections of *Tonight's The Night* and possesses several dear old 78s of *Glamorous Night*. None of this, however, adds up to a truly devoted reverence for our stage.

My friends the Bultitudes certainly outdo everybody else in the actual number of theatre visits made, being still inclined to, in their own phrase, 'crash up to Town and do a show'. Giles has in the past favoured what he still longingly refers to as 'leg shows' (the tired businessman, exhausted after a day spent cornering jute, was said to cheer up no end when a row of smiling chorus girls hauled up their skirts and waved their legs at him), while Bunty, intellectually the slightly more powerful of this charming pair, used to treat herself to such undoubted pleasures as *Perchance to Dream* and *Worm's Eye View*. But now, when they plan to make another thrilling dash to London ('The Dorchester's terribly full but they've managed to squeeze us in, bless them'), they ask me for my advice about what would be best for them to see ('What's that thing at the Vaudeville?'). They ask me because, as I go so frequently to London and am faintly connected with the entertainment world, it is locally and incorrectly assumed that Shaftesbury Avenue is what I suppose I must now call 'my scene'. I do not like to tell them that, when it comes to choosing nowadays a pleasurable evening's entertainment, I am every bit as much at a loss as they are. *Où sont les George and Margaret d'antan*?

For one thing, I no longer know where or what many of the advertised theatres actually are, although among newish theatres, I have certainly passed, on a bus, the National, which was to me a very cheering sight, bearing as it does to my eyes a strong resemblance to the Newton Abbot multi-storey car park, scene of many a triumphant shopping expedition ('My *dear*, Macfisheries have got mussels!'). But after the experience of A. J. P. Taylor (didn't he lose his way out and find himself upon the roof, unable to descend?) I can hardly send the Bultitudes to the National, and if not, where?

In, say, 1925 there would have been no sort of problem, so abundant would the Bultitude possibilities have been. It was in the theatre a merry mad vintage time for low brows, among whom I most happily count myself. For some reason, almost anything set elsewhere than in England was immensely popular. Thus, in *Fata Morgana* at the Criterion, Jeanne de Casalis (later to to be the wireless's deliciously dithering 'Mrs Feather') was to be seen on what the programme described as 'the great Hungarian plain known as the Puszta' (say it, I can only suppose, PUSHED HER) busily seducing an attractive young anchorite (Upper Circle, 5s 9d). Miss de Casalis's seduction kit consisted of an apricot satin housegown with generously slashed skirt and gleaming court shoes in a silvery pattern. From her dress there hung, here and there, a heavy tassel or two and the length of time that she required was approximately fifty minutes. The gentleman on the receiving end was a young American actor of considerable charm called Tom Douglas, though how or why he had ever got to the great Hungarian plain known as the Puszta was never explained. Endless playgoers, signing themselves 'Horrified Stallite', wrote in to say how revolted they had been.

Well then, at the Playhouse, a theatre which was to be closely associated (remember *The Letter*?) with that stunning English beauty, Gladys Cooper, some very un-English activities were going on and horrified stallites were pressing in to see something described as 'a play of the primitive in three Acts'. It was called *White Cargo* and it showed a dusky and semi-clad half-caste siren called Tondelayo (she always sounded to me rather like a particularly cheerful kind of yodel) encouraging mammy palaver among white men sweatily marooned in an African outpost of Empire. Excitement ran high, and not only on the stage. The Lord Chamberlain, interfering old donkey, insisted that Tondelayo should, in spite of the sultry weather, put on more clothes (one feels that he would have liked to see her in a tweed costume and one of those hats with a feather in it). Then one of the many touring companies found its theatre posters seized by the police at South Shields (acting-manager severely reprimanded). Meanwhile there was a fine fuss about the play being pirated from a novel called 'Hell's Playground'. And through it all, Tondelayo continued to drive them all mad among the mangrove swamps (Standing Room, 3s).

My own favourite treat of 1925 was without doubt a musical called *Katja the Dancer* (it moved to Daly's from the Gaiety), for which we were somewhere in the mysterious Balkans and in the classy world of Count Orpitch and Prince Carl of Koruja (the hero, you know) and it required the heroine, tuneful Lilian Davies, to close Act II by fainting sensationally backwards (I forgot quite why) with a cry of 'Carl!' down a flight of at least four stairs (it may well have been five). Our hands were quite raw with clapping. But, though sensational faints are well enough, what we were really waiting for was for an entrancing soubrette called Ivy Tresmand and a very jolly light comedian, Gene Gerrard, to sing the great hit of the evening, a popular song called 'Leander', the Christian name of the rôle played by Mr Gerrard. Determined as I am to bring you part of the lyrics, I have to strain my memory back 54 years, so pray bear with me:

With your Leander, your old goosey-gander,
Far off you will wander, by land or by sea.
Off we'll meander, for nothing could be grander
Than life as the wife
Of a bloke as broke as he.

The song never had fewer than six 'encore' choruses, in which almost everything, as you will have twigged, rhymed cleverly with Leander (matinees Wed and Sat).

Down memory's lane, other delights of 1925 come flooding. At Drury Lane there was *Rose Marie*, the plot activated by yet another half-caste adventuress with eyes on the hero ('You come to Wanda's cabin, maybe?' she hissed at him, undulating a little, towards the end of Act I while the vast orchestra scraped dramatic chords in a minor key). The Aldwych farces were in fullest swing with *A Cuckoo in the Nest* (how splendid that such pieces are now being revived), with Yvonne Arnaud squeaking away in the frog accent that she was so careful to preserve and, even, improve, Tom Walls as a pickled Major and Robertson Hare as, of course, a curate. And for the enjoyment, I hope, of some of our older readers, with their own joyous recollections ('It was our binge for Mona's twenty-first and we took a box'), I add a mere list of titles: *No, No, Nanette!*, *The Vortex*, Charlot's Revue (Miss Lillie, Miss Lawrence, Mr Buchanan) *The Green Hat*, *Hay Fever*, *The Co-Optimists* and *On With the Dance*. Goodness me; my eyes mist over at the very names.

Roger Woddis

Dilemma

An investigating committee chaired by Professor Bernard Williams recommends controversial changes in the obscenity laws.

You really are a tease, Professor,
You and your contentious twelve,
Bringing out the kind of survey
Wiser heads would rather shelve.

Oh, don't shrug and say your findings
After all were reached *nem. con.;*
I don't know what lead to follow,
Or whose bloody side I'm on.

People should be free to savour
What they see or smoke or drink;
Both in theory and in practice,
I'm for liberty — I think.

Ah, but letting market forces
Profit from the sale of sin
Undermines our Cherished Values
And Corrupts Us from Within.

Come — I shall not shilly-shally,
Only lesser men abstain;
Let me raise my banner boldly:
I'm for freedom — then again . . .

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CHRISTMAS BOOKS — 1

Eva Figes

Art of Life

My Life by GEORGE SAND edited & translated by Dan Hofstadter *Gollancz* £7.95
The George Sand-Gustave Flaubert Letters *Academy, Chicago* $14.95 & $5.95
George Sand: In Her Own Words *Quartet* £7.50
The Double Life of George Sand: Woman and Writer by RENEE WINEGARTEN *Basic Books* $15
Homosexualities and French Literature edited by George Stambolian & Elaine Marks *Cornell* £11

I was once asked which historical personage I would have chosen to be and picked George Sand without any hesitation, not because I was seduced by the popular image but because no other woman before our own time, certainly no writer, so completely escaped the narrow choices imposed on women. While gifted women pined away in remote rectories and even George Eliot buried her shame in St John's Wood, Sand had it all – lovers, friends, a dazzling career and a contented old age in the bosom of her family.

Like Goethe, George Sand's chief work of art was her life, but because she was a woman that life became a subject for scandal and gross distortion. Popular biographies, like the new one by Renee Winegarten, will continue to appear and tend to read like hectic *romans à clef*, but we need to know what she has to say about herself and life in general because she had a rare genius for living. If her cornucopia was filled to the brim, luck did not come into it, but wisdom, generosity, warmth and deep moral convictions did.

So Dan Hofstadter has done a valuable service in trimming down the 20 volumes of *Histoire de ma vie* to a reasonable length for the modern English reader. Those who want to know about her love affairs, the rows and scandals of her early life, must turn to Renee Winegarten for the familiar story. *My Life* provides an insight into the young Aurore Dupin who was to mature into the later George Sand, and it is clear from reading her own words that the development was not without considerable pain. After her father's death in a riding accident her childhood was embittered by a battle for possession between her aristocratic grandmother and her working-class mother, whom George adored but who was depicted by her grandmother as little better than a whore. Abandoned by her mother, beaten by a maid whom she would not betray, she seethed with a secret rebellion which was common to so many women of her generation. Fact, not fiction, but one cannot read these pages without thinking of the childhood of Jane Eyre. It was from this early sense of personal injustice, she writes, that her sympathy for the downtrodden stemmed, in spite of high birth and affluence. Yes indeed: we know why *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was written by a woman.

My Life provides many insights which contradict the rather frantic legend retold by Winegarten. She was educated at an English Catholic convent in Paris, vividly described in pages especially remarked on by Flaubert, and in spite of much rebellious 'devilry' became so devout that she determined to become a nun, a resolve which had to be kept secret from her grandmother, a firm disciple of Voltaire. Though she gradually allowed Casimir Dudevant to woo her away from becoming a bride of Christ, the 'tender side' of Christianity had a lasting effect on her moral and political philosophy. But perhaps the most amusing insight is Sand's own explanation for that most scandalous feature of the legend: Sand as transvestite. When she first came to

Paris on a tiny allowance to earn an independent living she simply could not afford the wardrobe a woman needed to go to the theatre at night. She asked her mother how she, the daughter of a poor Parisian birdseller, had managed to look smart in her youth, and was told that the birdseller regularly dressed his daughters as boys to save money, a custom she and her sister continued as grown women, since it halved their bills. From then on Sand found herself as free to roam the streets at night as her male artist friends.

Sand's genius was for friendship rather than amorous adventure, and nowhere does this come out with such shining clarity as in the correspondence with Flaubert. It began in 1863, when Sand was almost 60 and Flaubert, 17 years her junior, was just beginning his long and agonising labour on *L'Education sentimentale*, which Sand was to defend so fiercely when Flaubert's masterpiece was attacked by the critics, even though it was so alien to her own philosophy of life. It is precisely because the two loving and admiring friends were as different as chalk and cheese that this correspondence is more than a testament to enduring friendship. It becomes a dialogue. Sand, prolific, outgoing, putting life, love and family before her art, which she never took very seriously, a democrat of the heart; Flaubert the recluse, the disgusted elitist, agonising over a phrase, tormented in the search for perfection. Sand constantly tries to jerk him out of his misery, as usual playing her maternal role: let rip, she says, and edit afterwards; get married, or at least go for healthy walks. He tries to explain his difficulties, his aesthetic principles, while she tries to imbue him with some of the wisdom and patience, the belief in nature which has made her the person he so much admired.

In the course of this dialogue, which ended only with her death in 1876, each one explained the principles and motivating forces which made them act as they did to the other, insights now invaluable to the student of Sand, Flaubert, or the history of France during the period. Even Sand's dogged optimism was shaken by the Franco-Prussian War and both of them sound curiously prophetic, foreseeing the aftermath. 'All Europe will wear a uniform,' wrote Flaubert, and Sand wrote that Germany would become 'the focus of the pestilence of Europe'. But before she died she was once more writing to him of the delights of the countryside, of bathing in the river every day, of botany, the play or novel she finished last week, and the happiness of watching her grandchild Aurore growing up. Unable to accept her philosophy of human goodness, Flaubert had nevertheless begun to write *Un Coeur simple* to please her when he heard of her death. After her funeral he wrote to her son: 'It seemed to me that I was burying my mother the second time...What genius, and what heart! But she lacked nothing, it is not she whom we must pity.'

The true flavour of Sand comes over best in her own words, and the correspondence with Flaubert reflects what was in many ways the most contented period of her life, her peaceful old age at Nohant, hardly touched on, for obvious reasons, in the Winegarten biography. But she is not well served in the anthology *In Her Own Words*, which consists of bleeding chunks chosen without apparent rhyme or reason, from novels, letters and journalism. A disproportionate amount of space is given to *Indiana* which, as Ellen Moers says in her introduction, is not typical of her work, while Sand herself, in *My Life*, insists that it is not her own story. But then, how often is Sand really allowed to speak for herself? All too rarely.

It is difficult to know what Sand would have made of the interviews, statements and critical essays in *Homosexualities and French Literature*, she who wrote to Flaubert that 'there is only one sex. A man and a woman are so entirely the same thing, that one hardly understands the mass of distinctions and subtle reasons with which society is nourished concerning this subject.' The new French criticism combined with American literary psycho-analysis has managed to multiply the mass of distinctions and subtle reasoning which make up this volume, and according to the contributors the image of Sand seems to be partly to blame for the proliferation of effete men in French literature. (The book might have been more interesting if the contributors had tried to blame her for the crop of 'effete' authors, Proust in particular, it discusses.) Anyone interested in Monique Wittig

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should certainly read her statement on political lesbianism, but on the whole I think Sand would have agreed with Barthes 'that this process of differentiation and pluralization may someday make it pointless to speak about homosexualities at all'. Since I agree with Sand that there is only one sex, certainly as far as writing is concerned, I think that day has arrived. I certainly disagree with the essay which suggests that Sand was responsible for the image of the sadistic *femme fatale* in 19th-century French literature. Men's *angst* about strong women is as old as time, which is why it was necessary to distort the image of George Sand so far from the reality. She never wanted to castrate men: her role in her relationships with men was always strongly maternal. But, of course, that is the heart of the problem as far as men are concerned.

Francis Wheen

Lunchtime O'Booze

The Fall of the House of Beaverbrook by LEWIS CHESTER & JONATHAN FENBY *Deutsch* £7.50

Goldenballs by RICHARD INGRAMS *Private Eye/Deutsch* £4.25

In the worlds of journalism, advertising, publishing and commerce, everything starts with lunch. There are disastrous lunches, such as one described by Messrs Chester and Fenby, when Charles Wintour and Simon Jenkins of the *Evening Standard* were invited by Vere Harmsworth, of Associated Newspapers, to meet Lou Kirby of the *Evening News* and David English of the *Daily Mail*. When they arrived at Harmsworth's house, Wintour and Jenkins were received by a man who described himself as Mr Harmsworth's chauffeur, who poured out 'two of the largest gin and tonics they had ever seen – brimming half pint tumblers, half gin, half tonic'. After half an hour their host eventually arrived, and the assembled editors began to discuss the future of London's evening papers.

> The chauffeur, meanwhile, busied himself with serving lunch. The fare, according to one guest, was 'cold consommé, rapidly unfrozen lamb chops that skidded as people made stabs at them, frozen peas that skedaddled all over the plate and fruit salad that dribbled as Wintour frothed. It was like a last lunch.' At one particularly tense moment the chauffeur accidentally tipped a chop and a quantity of peas into Wintour's lap.

And there are agreeable lunches, such as the *Private Eye* gatherings described by Richard Ingrams:

> These lunches, held every alternate Wednesday, have been going on for several years now. About twelve people attend, four of them from *Private Eye* – myself, Patrick Marnham, Martin Tomkinson and Auberon Waugh. The others are guests, mostly journalists, who are expected to some extent to 'sing for their supper' by providing *Private Eye* with information.

It is over lunch that journalists and businessmen most frequently meet; but even without the wine and liqueurs it's doubtful if their understanding of each other would be much clearer, as both these books show. Chester and Fenby deal with the cash crisis which threatened Beaverbrook Newspapers with extinction as the 1970s wore on, and the chaotic, haphazard way in which possible solutions were canvassed. Eventually, of course, Beaverbrook was swallowed up by Trafalgar House Ltd (Nigel Broackes's giant, which includes among its possessions the *QE2* and the Ritz), and other possible saviours considered were Sir James Goldsmith, Tiny Rowland, Rupert Murdoch and Olga Deterding; but during most of the negotiations (including the frozen chop lunch with Harmsworth) the likely outcome seemed to be a deal with Associated Newspapers, the old rival.

Nowhere is the business mind's approach to newspapers clearer than in the earliest discussions between the two groups, in 1970. During a series of lunches John Coote, managing director of Beaverbrook, and Duke Hussey, his opposite number at Associated, came up with a brilliant wheeze. Look, said Hussey, we run the *Daily Mail* and the London *Evening News*, you run the *Express* and the *Evening Standard*; neither of us is doing too well; if we amalgamate the *Express* and *Mail*, and create a joint London evening paper too, we'll have a monopoly in two hefty markets and save the trouble of all this costly competition. Visions of huge profits floated before their eyes.

This deal foundered at the time, but it wasn't long before the idea was resurrected. Indeed it would probably have been put into practice had it not been for the one-man campaign of Charles Wintour, long-time editor of the *Evening Standard*: unable to stomach the idea of joining forces with the old enemy, he rushed round Fleet Street and the City encouraging other bidders. Nevertheless, the final decision rested with the 10 trustees of the Beaverbrook Foundation – mainly members of the Aitken family and their friends – and, as Wintour said in a letter to Michael Foot, 'a less suitable group to decide the fortunes of a firm employing 7,000 people, with a turnover of £100 million and publishing three newspapers that claim to have an important effect on the nation's destiny, could scarcely be devised'. It seemed that they would have to accept either Rupert Murdoch or Vere Harmsworth – both of them direct competitors – until a last-minute bid arrived from Trafalgar House. Chester and Fenby record the moment when Sir Max Aitken and Jocelyn Stevens effectively decided the future of Beaverbrook:

> 'Who do you want to win?' Sir Max asked.
> 'Trafalgar.'
> 'If that is so, so do I.'

Sir Max persuaded the trustees, and so This Great Industry Of Ours was saved – until the next crisis.

Of the others who bid for Beaverbrook, by far the most determined was Sir James Goldsmith, a man whose interest in newspapers grew at the same speed as their interest in him. He failed with Beaverbrook as he had with the *Observer*, but these rebuffs merely strengthened his determination to discover what made newspapers tick, and in the end he created a paper of his very own; the performance of *Now!* so far suggests that he still doesn't understand journalism.

Nevertheless, you have to give the man full marks for effort. I think the obsessive nature of his campaign against *Private Eye* (chronicled with admirable clarity by Richard Ingrams), and its against him, derives from the mutual fascination which representatives of commerce and the press hold for each other. When, during his long libel case against the *Eye*, he sent private investigators to rummage through the magazine's dustbins, one suspects that it was not simply to gain evidence for use in the case but also to assist his education in the mysterious ways of Fleet Street, a thoroughfare on which he will now expound at length to any who will listen.

C. S. L. Davies

Grudging Consent

The Tudor Regime by PENRY WILLIAMS *Oxford* £15

The Reign of Mary Tudor by D. M. LOADES *Benn* £12.95

Twenty years ago Tudor history rang with the thunderbolts of academic titans. Revolutions in government, crises of the aristocracy, the rise (or decline) of the gentry, were the rage. Seminars were arenas for gladiatorial contests, and assassins stalked the pages of the learned journals.

The keynote now is responsibility, sobriety. The gladiators have reformulated their theses in more moderate terms, or moved elsewhere, to pursue sex, marriage and family life through the centuries. The age of hyperbole is over, and the vocabulary of 'crisis' and 'revolution' is distrusted, its coinage devalued through over-use.

These books exemplify the trend. Both are 500-page blockbusters. Penry Williams's evidently burst the bounds set for it by the publisher who commissioned it, and was taken over by OUP. In spite of its size, it is a clear, readable, sometimes vivid analysis of government at work. Political theory hardly obtrudes; little here about natural law, or sovereignty. Parliament features as the partner of the Crown in formulating legislation, not as a potential rival, exercising political machismo through opposition. And there is none of that institutional history which depressed and mystified generations of students as the privy seal fulfilled its manifest destiny and the 'Chamber' miraculously cured the Crown's financial problems. Description of the government machine is concise, but clear; so is the conspectus (itself a godsend) on royal finances through the century. There is a useful survey of the administrators, their fees, perks and not infrequent thefts. And, a welcome and salutary reminder, a chapter on 'force and arms'.

But the real meat is the analysis of government actually governing; and the net is thrown wide. Enforcement of economic and social legislation, enclosure laws, poor relief and so on, is familiar territory, though nowhere else so usefully brought together. More unusually, Dr Williams looks at crime; a subject beginning to excite social historians, but largely passed over by institutional ones for any reign later than Edward I's. More eyebrows still will be raised by the 'Establishment of Protestant-

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The **Oxford Junior Companion to Music,** £9.95, is a splendid music reference book for children of twelve and over. The new edition by Michael Hurd is beautifully written and designed, with more than 900 photographs and drawings in colour and black and white. Older music-lovers will appreciate the **Oxford Companion to Music,** £9.50, and Gerald Abraham's **Concise** (but wholly comprehensive) **Oxford History of Music,** just published at £15.

Christmas is a good time to ponder the garden, and all the gardeners on your list will be doing just that. Give them **Know and Grow Vegetables** – 'a must for anyone who wants to grow vegetables successfully', said the Birmingham Post: £3.95 or £1.95 in paperback. **Mushrooms and Toadstools: A Field Guide** is full of pictures which 'really seem to glow with life' (Anthony Huxley in Country Life) and of facts on every facet of mushroomology, including how not to get poisoned (£7.95, paperback £4.95): a trusty companion for forest foragings.

Lark Rise to Candleford by Flora Thompson, £4.95, is 'a book to give to anyone who has not read it yet' (Marghanita Laski). For those who know and love Lark Rise, the obvious present is our new book of Flora Thompson's other writings – **A Country Calendar,** £6.95: both are beautifully illustrated.

'The story of Dickens's life may be an old, old one – but it has never been better told', wrote Margaret Forster in the Evening Standard of **Dickens: A Life,** by Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie, £8.95. Charles Cruickshank's **Deception in World War II** is an astonishing tale of fake tanks, phony bases, simulated battles, and planted 'indiscretions', with official photographs never before published, £6.50.

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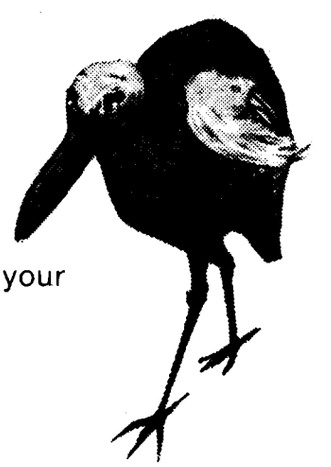

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ism' as a problem of enforcement rather than as a spontaneous upsurge of sensible Englishmen against the wiles of Rome and priestcraft. 'Court and culture' turns out to be about government interference in the universities and its attempts to control that potential instrument of subversion, the drama.

How effective was Tudor government? Penry Williams is soberly judicious. 'Feebly ineffective' he had thought, before writing the book. Now he has come to a realistically qualified but positive appreciation. A chapter-title, 'The Tudor Achievement', sounds like one of those triumphalist fanfares so readily sounded by some Tudor historians. In fact, Dr Williams's verdict is the more impressive because it is not attained by depicting the preceding 15th century as a period of unbridled feudalistic chaos, or by closing his eyes to the real weakness in the state which James I inherited. The situation in 1603 was disturbing, but (as the new school of Stuart historians would agree) very far from a state of crisis.

How was anything achieved at all? Once more, there is no easy formula. Politics, not institutional or constitutional change, seems the key; the 'manipulation of several social interests', 'a skilful combination of the formal and the informal, the political and the personal'. Great noblemen did not vanish overnight, and, right at the end of the century, the Earl of Shrewsbury was 'a Prince (alone in effect)' in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Yet, slowly, government worked away at the destruction of 'great and traditional accumulation of power' in certain regions; not, by and large, forcing the issue, but working with the grain, seizing its chances when it could as an accident of succession, or a false political move delivered the great inheritances into its keeping. Bullying, cajoling, a lively public relations effort to inspire awe and respect, patronage, and, in the last resort, coercion and repression, all helped to secure that acquiescence, that perhaps grudging consent, which made government reasonably effective.

Dr Loades has devoted his 500 pages to a reign of only five years, usually written off, at best, as a bleak prologue to the splendours of Gloriana. He does not much like Queen Mary, whom he holds as personally responsible for the burnings, a stubborn, obstinate woman, soured by her adolescence and the 'prolonged frustration' of being a virgin at 37. Nevertheless, Professor Pollard's famous put-down, 'sterility was the conclusive note of her reign', is quoted only for refutation. Mary's government, he argues, was not weak, but successfully enforced its will. Even the Queen's marriage to Philip of Spain was justified, and its failure ascribed to Philip's not exerting himself seriously to gain acceptance in England. Administrative reform abounded. And there was a sustained attempt to build up a positive, dynamic Catholicism, rather than merely restoring the status quo before Henry VIII upset the apple-cart.

Not everything is sweetness and light. Dr Loades argues that by 1558 Mary had alienated a good part of the conservative middle-ground, had even made possible the acceptance of Elizabeth 'in spite of her protestant settlement and radical supporters'. Even so, Dr Loades's view of the Marian regime seems much more favourable than in his earlier books; like Dr Williams, he has had the courage to change his views in the light of the evidence (a more common virtue in historians than is often implied). I do, though, take exception to the term 'reactionary'. What can this mean in a 16th-century context, unless one assumes the inevitable development which Dr Loades rightly discounts?

These are both serious and, in their way, provocative books, which anybody concerned to understand Tudor society on more than a coffee-table level should beg or borrow. (Not many, I take it, will afford to buy them.) Dr Loades's book would have benefited from more stringent editing; there really is no need to face the reader with quotations in Tudor spelling and three foreign languages (untranslated). More fundamentally, it may be that historians are becoming perhaps *too* judicious, too determined to be fair to hard-pressed administrators. 'Punishment was severe to the point of barbarism', remarks Dr Williams, while Dr Loades needs no reminder of the hideousness of the burnings. Their readers, however, may too easily pass over these realities as they contemplate a set of competent politicians doing their best in trying circumstances. The best academic history is becoming too bland.

Peter Conrad

The Third Sex

Dressing Up – Transvestism and Drag: The History of an Obsession by PETER ACKROYD
Thames & Hudson £4.95

For Peter Ackroyd the transvestite is less a sexual freak than a psychological virtuoso, less a lurid exhibitionist than a coolly self-celebrating artist. He emphasises the cross-dresser's rejection of the drab mercantile roles our society prescribes for us. All transvestites are for him variants of the Wildean dandy, who scorns vulgar utility and adheres instead to otiose, hedonistic beauty. Male costume is, he says, 'phallic and utilitarian', and by 'asserting . . . the primacy of pleasure and ornamentation' the transvestite is boldly inverting a social code. Ackroyd's own aestheticism takes it for granted that our identity is the product of the clothes we wear. In dressing up, his characters are both disrupting a symbolic system and anarchically or festively freeing society from its self-imposed constraints.

The tawdry drag queens who preen and posture in the illustrations to his book don't look much like liberators. Their art seems to consist more in lewd mimicry than in what Ackroyd sees as a neat metaphoric substitution. They're not so much questioning a masculinity which depends on stereotypes as pillorying the hated female by parodying her. Hence the intentional incompleteness of their illusion – Danny la Rue discarding his tits and his spangles at the end of his act; the simpering bride in the New Orleans mardi gras procession with an unregenerate walrus moustache; the hairy chests of the Cycle Sluts.

Ackroyd's argument, however, is subtle and persuasive. For him the transvestite has raised autoeroticism to the dignity of an art. He points out the transvestite's desperate dependence on the camera, which is required to validate his new identity: the 'artificial act of rebirth' he has staged must be represented and sanctified by 'the artificiality of the camera'. Certainly the subjects of his book always seem to be posing – the male whores of Singapore gigglingly draped over the bonnet of a car, Dame Edna sheathed in gladioli at Heathrow airport, a pot-bellied stevedore spilling out of a bikini during the New Orleans saturnalia.

The transvestite simpers to seduce the camera lens, or makes frenetic love to his own reflection in the mirror. This self-referring obsession is explained by Ackroyd, with the aid of the psychiatrist Robert Stoller, as a parabolic incest. Transmogrifying himself into the likeness of his mother, the transvestite is wriggling free from the threat she poses to him. He defends his own maleness by incorporating into it the inimical female sexual being: he evades the maternal threat of castration by making himself a woman triumphantly equipped with a phallus. Stoller admits this solution of a psychic terror as 'a remarkable tour de force'. The ancestral cause of humiliation has been magicked into 'an active process of sexual mastery and pleasure'.

As Baudelaire said of artistic genius, this is childhood recovered at will. Ackroyd's transvestites are heroic mythomaniacs, who have prolonged childhood into adult life. The Chevalier D'Eon alternated between male and female personae and made audacious use of his cross-dressing in a career of espionage for the French court. Edward Hyde, cousin of Queen Anne and governor of colonial New York, paraded through the streets of the city he ruled kitted out in crinolines. Even Jan Morris, though a trans-sexual, is promoted to shamanistic status: converting her loss into a gain, she has remarked that her operation has brought her closer to the unity at the heart of nature, and Ackroyd allies her with the African or Indian sorcerers who constitute 'a kind of honorary third sex' and 'are sources of divine authority within the community'. Julian Eltinge, the American female impersonator, dazingly consummates the narcissist's love-affair with himself in two of Ackroyd's illustrations. In one of them he edges amorously towards his mother on a rustic bench: they look as alike as clones. In the other, he is spliced to himself, his languishing female face superimposed on his male profile. He has engorged his mother, and thereby grown a double nature.

Dressing Up describes both a campy ascent to sublimity and a long, seedy degeneration. The transvestite begins in ritual and ends in cabaret. Androgyny in the tribal cultures Ackroyd reviews is a sacred condition, 'an original state of power'. The shaman's sexually dubious body is 'a receptacle of spirits with which, in ecstatic communion, he pleads and fights on behalf of his people'.

Deconsecrated, these visionary African dancers turn into Cyril Fletcher's leering panto dame or Craigh Russell's simulations of Streisand and Garland. But the magical purpose remains. Even the degraded drag queens of the homosexual clubs are amateur exorcists: in offering themselves as objects of ribald contempt, they relieve their audiences of a lurking sexual uncertainty and defuse fear into laughter.

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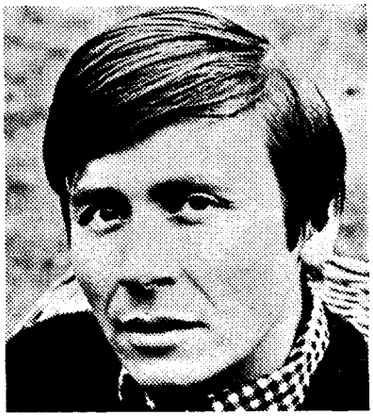

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Here, sir, a fine display of bravery
And fortitude, all rendered out of clay –
Here's Caius Mutius holding his right hand
Within the fire, showing Porsenna
The firmness of the Roman character;
On the reverse, the maid Cloelia
Selecting from the youthful hostages
Whom Porsenna will liberate. A piece
Noble and highly wrought, you will agree,
And by this vase, a terracotta plaque
Depicting in relief Da Vinci's great
'Battle of the Standard' – lavished round the rim
Oak leaves and acorns in the classic style,
This modelled wall-hanging won Second Prize
In 'Eighty-Two at Braintree – Lucilus
Personates Brutus, an Old Master's work
Young Edward copied with a master's skill,
Glazed ornamental is our special pride,
Gem-Ware encrusted, sprigged and polychrome –
But we love precedent in everything,
Old lessons handed on, the apostles' touch
Rendering all we make a sacrament
Blessed by the past – Egyptian, Roman, Greek.
Palissy plates and Babylonian shapes,
These ewers after Orazia Fontana's,
Tazzas adapted from Fijian ware
(Queen Emma of the Sandwich Isles came here.
And shook me by the hand, and bought a fine
Large model of our castle-keep, the source
Of so much inspiration – solid stuff.
Impregnable though ruined). Even these
Humbler creations have their ancestry:
Barm-pots and costrels, benisons and cloams,
Pottles and salt kits, gallipots and tygs,
The rude plain earthenware, traditional instruments
Rustic amusement used, the puzzle-jugs,
The bird-whistles – I made them, one by one
And gross by gross, to stock the waggonloads
That left our workshop, sagging above wheels
Bedded in mud, for markets dwindling down
To half a dozen hawkers raucously
Shouting our old-style wares to new-style ears. . .

For that, I fear,'s my story. What I put
In stone above the lintel is my text –
The psalmist's strong stern voice: 'Except the Lord
Do build the house, they labour in vain that build it'
And vain the labour too. With sweating kilns
That marred whole bungs at firing, bubbles, bloats
Scarring the intricate sprays and sprigs and lugs.
Added to muddle casting-up accounts,
And sons who emigrated or who died,
And Fashion sniggering at our 'quaintnesses',
Grown fond of delicate mincing porcelain . . .
Fine feathering, tib-work, the antique ornate
Crossed with the sturdy native English style,
Slumped to mere jobbery, plain coarse flower-pots,
Nothings by anyone for anyone.
No individual stamp, no sense of that
Grandeur I gave a title to – 'Unique
Art Pottery Works of Castle Hedingham'
('The *Royal* Art', after Queen Emma's visit).
Zion bewails her pitiful estate,
'Esteemed as earthen pitchers' –
meaning held
As low as dirt.
And yet our dirt is *clay*,
Grog, slurry to be fashioned into lives
As vivid as the mud our Infant Lord
Shaped into sparrows from the gutter-side . . .

★ ★ ★

The grunting drays convey the crocks away
Where they will gather dust in
crumbling sheds,
Back-ends of warehouses, a
bankrupt's stock.
Here in my cottage by the castle wall
I slowly foot the treadle of the wheel
That turns the last ceramic I shall make
Before the vessel's broken and the sherds
Are thrown onto the spoil-heap
where we lie
Until the angels' golden trumpets sound,
The Master Potter works his mystery,
And every fragment to its fragment's joined.

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Andrew Clements

Yurodivy

Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich edited by Solomon Volkov *Hamish Hamilton* £7.95
Prokofiev by Prokofiev *Macdonald* £9.50

In crabbed old age, Shostakovich saw his enemies everywhere and evidently felt the need to unburden himself of a life spent dodging authority and tyranny, and watching his friends perish one by one – 'I was remembering my friends, and all I saw was corpses, mountains of corpses.' These memoirs read convincingly enough; there is too much repetition and anecdote, the structure shambles along with too little sense of chronology for them to be counterfeit. Also, it is difficult to see who would benefit from their publication. Not the Soviet authorities, obviously, but not the anti-Soviets either: there is too little heroism in these pages, too much blind fear. There is nothing noble in Shostakovich's struggle against tyranny. Reading his tortured confessions, it is hard to feel moved: Shostakovich does not want pity, one suspects; he was past that.

Solomon Volkov's part in eliciting *Testimony* is presented in his introduction; first gaining the composer's confidence as a sympathetic reviewer of his music of the early 1960s, later being instrumental in getting an opera by one of his favourite pupils performed. As Shostakovich grew more and more aware of his approaching death, so his compulsion to present the last word became irresistible. Volkov took down the reminiscences in shorthand; the manuscript was smuggled out of the Soviet Union a year before Shostakovich died in 1975. In June 1976 Volkov emigrated to New York.

Volkov sees Shostakovich as the second great *Yurodivy* composer; Mussorgsky was the first: 'The *Yurodivy* has the gift to see and hear what others know nothing about.' The word crops up often in the course of the memoirs: to describe friends, and in connection with Mussorgsky (Shostakovich produced an orchestration of *Boris Gudunov* during the second world war). Yet to me Shostakovich is not the divine mystic Volkov would have him be. He does not give us glimpses of another world in his music; he may trick us into believing something other than his intention or smile weakly through his tears, but he does not enlighten or uplift. Solzhenitsyn criticised Shostakovich for what he saw as his profound pessimism, but the bleakness of spirit surely extends only to a handful of works, albeit that one of them, the Fourteenth Symphony, is his masterpiece. Elsewhere there is much bitterness, but nothing so articulate as pessimism.

Admirers hoping to find something substantially new on Shostakovich's music here will be disappointed. There is precious little about the craft of composing, few shafts of light to illuminate what remains a largely enigmatic output. What there is only increases the enigma. We learn that the *Leningrad* Symphony was intended as much as a portrait of the rise of Stalin in the pre-war years as a portrayal of the fate of Shostakovich's home

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city, that the Fifteenth Symphony is closely related to an opera based on Chekhov's *The Black Monk*, planned but never started, and that the finale of the Fifth Symphony (written as 'a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism') is a false, forced triumph, deliberately empty rhetoric. But musical contemporaries only appear when they impinge in some extra-musical way. There are warm remembrances of Glazunov, ambivalent feelings about Prokofiev; Stravinsky is kept very much at arm's length. Shostakovich's relationship with his peers has always been ambiguous. Schoenberg is not mentioned in *Testimony*, but Shostakovich was aware of his music to the extent, as Hans Keller has shown, of basing the structure of his Eleventh String Quartet on that of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony. Berg is mentioned as a pleasant individual who charmed the orchestra when he was invited to Leningrad to supervise a production of *Wozzeck*; Britten, with whom Shostakovich built up a mutually warm relationship in the 1960s, does not feature at all.

The core of *Testimony* is, inevitably, the Stalin years; Shostakovich's single meeting with him forms the book's climax. Along with other leading Soviet composers he had been invited to write a new national anthem; the short-listed versions, including those by Shostakovich, Khachaturian and a joint composition by both of them, were auditioned by Stalin himself. On expert advice the leader chose the co-authored anthem but suggested some minor changes to the words, and asked Shostakovich how long the amendments would take. When Shostakovich replied five hours, Stalin was outraged that such an important task could be dismissed so quickly and changed his mind, choosing Alexandrov's anthem instead. But Stalin is the baleful presence behind so much more of the book that it is impossible to think of composer without tyrant. The Khrushchev era afforded some relief, at least from the most basic fears of gratuitous elimination, but Shostakovich does not seem to have prospered from his position as the Grand Old Man of Soviet music. He retired into himself, his music became more elliptical, he travelled to the West and found one or two friends there. He was hailed as the saviour of tonal symphonic music; his music probably reached a wider audience than that of any other living composer. But he seems to have derived little comfort from that:

> I've described many unpleasant and even tragic events, as well as several sinister and repulsive figures. My relations with them brought me much sorrow and suffering. And I thought perhaps my experience in this regard could also be of some use to people younger than I. Perhaps they wouldn't have the horrible disillusionment that I had to face, and perhaps they would go through life better prepared, more hardened, than I was. And perhaps their lives would be free from the bitterness that has coloured my life grey.

After such heavy going, Prokofiev's immodest autobiography is refreshingly light and frothy. It covers only the first 17 years of his life, very much the progress of an *enfant terrible*, who preferred to write symphonies to doing harmony exercises at the age of 11, who wrote his first opera, *The Giant*, when he was nine. Glière was his first, long-suffering, composition teacher, Glazunov supervised his entry into the Conservatory. It was an early life of almost unbroken success; Prokofiev quickly learnt the pragmatism that Shostakovich so badly lacked.

In what book this Christmas will you find all these people together?

David Attenborough,
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Dialogue with Photography by PAUL HILL & THOMAS COOPER *Thames & Hudson* £7.50

The Americans by ROBERT FRANK *Gordon Fraser* £16

Tourism and photography grew up together and are now inseparable. As far back as the 1850s, when Brits set out to attend to the planet's affairs, a camera usually went with them. By the 1860s an image industry serviced a middle class busily constructing a mental map of a world which, Sir Charles Dilke assured them, was growing a little more English every day. But one of the very last nations visited by the gentleman photographers was the other England, set apart by the great Victorian divide of social class. And even those who did venture across were often more interested in the picturesque than in the plight of the poor.

Don McCullin should be different. He is not, after all, a class tourist but a returning emigrant, a dirt-poor Cockney now world-famous for those photographs of war in the *Sunday Times* colour magazine which can make the ads unusually obscene. Now after 14 years of staking his life on other people's deadlines and front lines, McCullin returns to photograph the casualties of our own class war. But he goes on to say 'My book isn't about England, I suppose, as much as it's about me.'

McCullin is not political, but he does care about people and can smell out poverty where others no longer notice or care. He tries to convey the intensity of his concern through his photographs – and that is where the confusion begins. Reformers, especially socialists, have never had much success with the language of photography in advocating causes. But before judging how much faith we should put in photographs like these, it's worth knowing a bit more about where they come from.

McCullin's earliest ancestor, the first professional war photographer, Felice Beato, was already a veteran of the Crimea and the Mutiny in India when he photographed the Anglo-French assault on Peking in 1860. *The Face of China* features the first extant photographs of dead soldiers – the Chinese who tried to resist British drug-peddling. The shock quickly wore off. Tastefully posed corpses from the American Civil War were soon selling in quantity into family albums: killing had become a media commodity. By chance, another early photographer in China was also a precursor of McCullin. John Thomson travelled 5,000 miles to document, with a surprisingly direct eye, an empire in disintegration – crumbling monuments, doomed merchants, cruel customs and unnatural punishments. His photographs acquire added politi-

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cal meaning in the context of Nigel Cameron's historical commentary which tells how, out of sight of the West, 15 million Chinese died in a primitive socialist rebellion, and how in the famine of the 1870s butchers' shops routinely sold human meat. At the time, Thomson's photographs sold as exotica.

Thomson's next expedition showed an advance in technique. Commissioned to document life in 'darkest' London, he followed the footsteps of Mayhew accompanied this time by a journalist who supplied detailed text. Significantly, the true father of crusading photojournalism was not a photographer but an angry and frustrated journalist. Jacob Riis, once a poor emigrant, wanted photographs as visual evidence of overcrowding and exploitation in New York at the end of the century. When he couldn't find a photographer brave enough Riis did the job himself – with a cheap camera and a frying pan full of flash powder. These photographs have a raw, artless integrity and they helped sweep away some of the worst hovels.

The only pictures in *Dialogue with Photography* are mugshots of the photographers interviewed who, at a theoretical level, are as woolly as ever. Beaumont Newhall, who with Helmut Gernsheim excavated the foundations of photography, explains it away by saying that no vocabulary yet exists for analysing the visual properties of still photographs. And W. Eugene Smith spoofs photography's bantamweight record by saying, 'I have the courage of my convictions, I just don't like to serve the time'. In fact, Smith is one photo-essayist who did serve his time, in Minamata, where he exposed over years the terrible effects of mercury poisoning on a Japanese fishing community.

Robert Frank was yet another tourist, an expatriate Swiss who saw America as a grey wilderness of urban ephemera inhabited by driven, expressionless people quite bereft of the dignity afforded by the 1930s documentary style. Frank stripped away the romance of social realism – all of 25 years ago. And that bleak vision is now a dominant cliché – so much so that *The Americans*, now reprinted, might have been photographed yesterday. It was the humanist Eugene Smith who criticised Frank's desolating subjectivity: 'He's being true to himself', he said, 'at the expense of his subject.'

McCullin, by attempting to relocate himself through images of England in decline, runs the same risk. After a decade of victim-documentary, his cast is familiar – the meths drinkers and dossers, the eccentric and deranged. Urban dereliction is the backdrop for the new underclass: the immigrants, elderly, unemployed, and those who just can't cope. The mood is sombre, the prints grainy, and the light and skies 'dramatic'. In the absence of hard information about subjects this visual melodrama invites at best diffused indignation, at worst, sentimentality or scepticism. But in some his compassion undeniably comes through (three ragged children in a Bradford bed) with the simple power echoed in his politics ('I refuse to believe that it wouldn't be possible for all children in this country to go to bed in pyjamas and in warm bedrooms with wallpaper on the walls').

Fearless in action, McCullin frets constantly about the ethics of intrusion and the growing hostility of those photographed. The time is long gone when even a caring reporter was seen as a natural ally of the underprivileged.

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ANDRE DEUTSCH

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Today even compassion can be a commodity and McCullin is too often complicit, offering curiosity and easy contrast instead of hammering away at contradictions.

David Lodge

Beyond the Catastrophe

Shikasta by DORIS LESSING *Cape* £5.95

From the back of the dust jacket, superbly photographed by Fay Godwin, Doris Lessing gazes out at the reader with a look that is at once challenging and compassionate: a handsomer George Eliot, a less ascetic Mother Teresa – and a touch of the fortune-telling gipsy. Doris Lessing began her literary career very much in the Great Tradition, and she has remained faithful to George Eliot's lofty conception of the writer's responsibility to instruct, heal and unify. But Lessing's intellectual development has taken her a long way from Eliot's kind of fictional realism. Having passed through communism, feminism, existential psychoanalysis, to Sufism, increasingly obsessed with the threats to the world from pollution, social anarchy and nuclear arms, she has turned to mythopoeic forms of narrative to warn the human race of the coming Catastrophe – not so much in the hope of averting it, as to offer some quasi-religious faith and hope for the future beyond. In her new book she has chosen to work entirely within the conventions of 'science fiction', unqualified by the 'naturalising' devices of parody, dream and delirium which she used in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell.*

The full title establishes the basic premise: *Archives Re.: Colonised Planet 5 SHIKASTA Personal Psychological Historical Documents Relating to Visit by Johor (George Sherban) Emissary (Grade 9) 87th of the Period of the Last Days*. This, then, purports to be a history of our Earth ('Shikasta'), especially in the latter part of the 20th century, from the point of view of beings from the star Canopus – superior beings, who originally colonised our northern hemisphere with a race of giants (cf. Genesis 6.4. 'there were giants in the earth in those days') thus accelerating the evolution of the native apes into men. Because of the outbreak of an irreversible Degenerative Disease the giants were withdrawn by Canopus (all but a few recalcitrants who became Abominable Snowmen) but Canopus continues to take a paternalistic interest in unhappy Shikasta through the reports and interventions of its agents, such as Johor, who visit the Earth in spirit form and occasionally volunteer to be incarnated as human beings, such as George Sherban.

The book consists mainly of Johor's reports and reflections, interspersed with the reports of other agents, case-histories of representative human beings and letters to, from and about members of the Sherban family who, inspired by George, a Gurdjieffian holy man, do what they can to ease the throes of the Last Days and to ensure the survival of a saving remnant. Civilisation as we know it ends with global famine, epidemic disease, and a genocidal war of revenge by the Third World against the white races; but *Shikasta* ends with a Utopian vision of a prelapsarian world restored to a happy few.

The basic myth articulated here, and underlying all Doris Lessing's work since *The Four-Gated City*, is a very old one, which can be traced back through Jewish and Christian apocalyptic thought for two millennia: the myth of the consuming destruction of a corrupt and fallen world from which a brave new world will be born. As Frank Kermode has ably demonstrated, its most potent source, after the book of *Revelation*, has been the 12th-century monk Joachim of Flora, whose ideas turn up in the most surprising places, including such major figures of the modern literary imagination as Lawrence and Yeats. Doris Lessing quotes Yeats in *Shikasta* and her affinity with Lawrence has always been clear. She also draws for imagery and allusion on the Old Testament, on Virgil and Dante, Milton and Blake. But what will dismay many of her admirers is that the basic fable and machinery of *Shikasta* (the first instalment of a promised trilogy) seem to derive from much shoddier sources, like Erich Von Daniken's *Chariots of the Gods*, the *kitsch* religion of Ufology, and space operas like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Star Wars*.

Science fiction is a very simple way of achieving that effect in literature which the Russian Formalists called defamiliarisation, or 'making strange': breaking down the deadening effects of habit, making us see, as if for the first time, the true nature of the world we inhabit. All good writing has this effect: it was precisely what George Eliot was aiming at in her realistic novels. But the radical displacements and transformations permitted by science fiction are especially useful for the purpose of defamiliarising collective rather than individual experience. 'Looking from outside at this planet,' says Johor, 'it was as if at a totally crazed species.' Undoubtedly there are passages in *Shikasta* where Doris Lessing achieves this feat of surprising the reader into viewing his world as if from 'outside', and feeling a real grief and outrage at the evils, atrocities, disasters, and hideous dangers which merely numb us when we encounter them on TV or in the newspapers.

There are powerful critiques embedded in this text of the divisiveness of politics, the repressiveness of institutionalised religion, the arrogance of modern science; and moving evocations of a golden age in which man was not as death-haunted as he is with his present pathetic life-span. That the characters are sticks does not matter too much, since this is essentially a novel of ideas.

What is unsatisfactory – to this reader, anyway – is the basic fable: the benevolent supervision of Earth by Canopus, 'working at its plans of rescue and reform' through its high-minded, selfless agents. Not only is this idea expressed in a mode that is all too 'familiar'; it also seems to raise unresolved ideological and metaphysical questions. If Canopus 'colonised' our Earth, it cannot be immune from Doris Lessing's own critique of Western imperialism; and it must bear some responsibility for our woes since it started our history off. This responsibility is never acknowledged. The Fall or Degenerative Disease which made the Canopian experiment go wrong is caused by a mysterious and unpredictable alteration in the cosmic fields of force, whose effects Canopus cannot control, only alleviate. The fable of *Shikasta*, therefore, offers only a palliative for, not an answer to the perennial problems of evil, suffering and individual death. It fails not because it isn't 'true' but because it is, in the last analysis, sentimental. But whether you like it or not, it certainly makes you think; and there are too few works of fiction around of which that can be said, not to be grateful.

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Anthony Arblaster

What is to be Done?

The Socialist Register 1979 edited by Ralph Miliband & John Saville *Merlin* £6 & £3

Writing in these pages a few weeks back, Brian Harrison suggested that *History Workshop Journal* restricted its readership, and its challenge to established orthodoxies, by calling itself 'A Journal of Socialist Historians'. What would he make of *The Socialist Register,* which for 16 years now has carried that forbidding word in its very title? In fact the flaunting of the term 'socialist' forms an essential part of the challenge, and symbolises the determination of these and other enterprises of the Left that even in insular Britain the political legitimacy of socialism shall not be forever denied. And if socialist ideas and arguments are far more present within British political culture than they were 20 years ago, there is no doubt that some of the credit must go to the *Register* and its diligent editors.

Along with *New Left Review,* the *Register* emerged in the early 1960s from the energetic debates and arguments associated with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and with what must now be called the old New Left – as opposed to the new New Left of the late Sixties and thereafter. The original New Left was a post-1956 phenomenon. Khrushchev's extraordinary denunciation of Stalin, coupled with his suppression of the Hungarian uprising, destroyed for ever the credibility of one kind of Communist orthodoxy (Stalinism) and led to mass resignations from the British CP, among others. Aspects of this crisis within Communism were recalled in an illuminating symposium in the 1976 *Register.* After 1956 many of these ex-Communists came together with other socialists who were trying to develop alternative perspectives, not only to the thorough-going revisionism of Gaitskell and Crosland, but also to the somewhat fossilised socialism of the Bevanite parliamentary Left.

Only after 1956, we can say, was it possible as well as necessary to develop (or recover) ways of thinking about socialism which avoided both the monstrosities of Stalinism and the weaknesses and illusions of social democracy. This, broadly, has been the central preoccupation of the Left for the past two decades and more; and it has, I think, also been the central preoccupation of *The Socialist Register.*

Increasingly in the Seventies the debate has been, not so much about concepts *of* socialism as about strategies *for* socialism. Much of this debate has been conducted in the pages of successive *Registers,* which the editors, with admirable and non-sectarian tolerance, have kept open to a considerable variety of Left viewpoints. In the present issue, for example, Ian Birchall replies, rather unconvincingly to my mind, to Martin Shaw's formidable indictment of the Socialist Workers' Party's record in the previous issue. There is also an extremely well argued and well documented

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rejoinder by Leo Panitch to Ken Coates's defence of the Labour Party as potential vehicle for socialism in the 1973 *Register*. Ralph Miliband's short 'commentary' on Rudolf Bahro is best seen as the latest in the sequence of articles he has contributed to the past four *Registers*. These short pieces, always clearly argued and elegantly written, have sought to develop a perspective for socialist change which is neither insurrectionist on the one hand, nor insipidly gradualist and parliamentarist on the other. They repay careful reading.

Another group of articles in the current issue can also be seen as concerned with strategy, but at one remove, by considering the records of Communist and socialist parties and states. There is a valuably informative report, by George Ross and Jane Jenson, on recent ructions within the French Communist Party, and this, too, is a sequel to pieces by Ross in the past two issues. But I sensed a lack of any overall perspective, such as makes the article on post-Franco Spain by Julio Aramberri at once more memorable and more fruitfully controversial. Aramberri argues that the Spanish Communist Party, whose role in the transitional period has been crucial, failed to make the most of the popular movement for change which followed the dictator's death, largely because it was mesmerised or claimed to be, by the spectre of a military coup. Aramberri argues that this was an illusory danger, and that the PCE and the Left have too readily allowed the Right-wing inheritors of Franco to lay down the rules of the new political game.

Also in this group we must place the clear and succinct article in which Jerome Karabel offers a convincing explanation of the failure of socialism in the United States, as well as D. M. Nuti's remarkable piece exploring the contradictions within the 'socialist' economies and state systems of eastern Europe. Nuti certainly takes a broad sweep. He rejects the arguments of those who regard the Soviet model as a kind of 'state capitalism' with a new type of ruling class. He surveys the entire economic history of the Soviet Union, and diagnoses the central problem of the authoritarian socialist economy as the tendency to over-accumulation of capital and over-investment.

The conclusions he draws from this analysis are tentatively hopeful. Democratisation is a real possibility; a reversion to out-and-out capitalism is unlikely. It would be nice if he were right. My only doubt springs from the fact that, back in the (comparatively) palmy days of Khrushchev, some commentators argued that political liberalisation was unstoppable because it derived from the logic of Soviet economic advance. Yet with the advent of Brezhnev it stopped. I'm not sure how Nuti would account for this. His essay deserves widespread discussion.

Finally, as prologue and epilogue to this year's collection stand two articles which, in different ways, cast a good deal of light on the ideological roots of the revival of the British Right, and on the government which now represents that revival so fiercely and directly. Hilary and Steven Rose, in a survey of recent arguments about science, draw attention to the re-emergence in a popular sociobiological form, of the old Hobbesian-capitalist picture of human nature as essentially competitive, aggressive and selfish – to say nothing of the Malthusian echoes in the passage they cite from Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene*. As they say, a certain kind of 'biological reductionism' has been an integral part of Thatcherite Conservatism.

In a recent Left pamphlet the current reaction against Keynesianism was dismissed as a 'fad'. For anyone tempted to suppose that the present Government's policies are inspired by nothing more substantial than fads and prejudices, Andrew Gamble's essay on 'social market' philosophy, which opens this year's *Register*, ought to be compulsory reading. In response to the collapse of Keynesian and social democratic economic policies, the Conservatives have refurbished their old faith in capitalism and the 'free' market, and for this they have taken as their intellectual mentors Hayek, Friedman, and their disciples among British economists and economic pundits. But, as Gamble clearly shows, this is not a simple return to 19th-century economic liberalism. The restoration of the market requires firm, indeed ruthless, government action, and carries with it two particularly sinister corollaries.

The first is that trade union power must be weakened, and if possible destroyed. The very existence of the unions disrupts the market, and economic liberals 'cannot discover any economic role for them at all'. The second is that political democracy is seen as a threat or impediment to economic freedom, and the social market propagandists have come up with various suggestions for restricting the scope of democracy, such as less frequent elections, and placing certain institutions, such as private property, and certain laws, beyond the reach of elected parliaments to change. Paradoxical as it may seem, a strong state is as important to this strategy as is a 'free' market. Both elements are clearly present in the policies of the Thatcher government. Those who want to understand why, and what they portend, cannot do better than read Andrew Gamble's clear and forceful essay.

Among this week's contributors:

ANTHONY THWAITE's poem is one of a sequence called *Victorian Voices* which he has just completed.

ANTHONY ARBLASTER is a lecturer in politics at Sheffield University and has contributed to the *Socialist Register*.

DAVID LODGE's The Modes of Modern Writing has just been re-issued in paperback by Arnold. His new novel, *How Far Can You Go?*, will be published by Secker next spring.

GUS MACDONALD is an executive with Granada television and author of *Camera* (Batsford).

C. S. L. DAVIES is a Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at Wadham College, Oxford, and author of *Peace, Print and Protestantism 1450-1558* (Paladin).

EVA FIGES's last published novel was *Nelly's Version* (Secker 1977).

FRANCIS WHEEN is currently working on a guide to the British Left.

PAUL BINDING's *Separate Country: A Literary Journey Through the South* was published by Paddington earlier this year.

JOHN SPURLING's most recent play was *Antigone Through the Looking Glass*.

MARK KIDEL is on the staff of Dartington College of Arts, Devon.

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Richard Appignanesi & John Berger

The Road to Mandalay: Cooperative Publishing

The Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative was formed in the autumn of 1974. Had anyone asked us then, what theory of cooperative socialism do you hold? do you identify yourselves as latter day Owenites or Proudhonian socialists? our answer would not have been very satisfactory. All we knew clearly was that we wanted to create a political alternative for literary production. Although we recognise that our vision – in the interim – has often seemed blunted in the day-to-day business of survival; that a sort of empirical arrogance, an impatience with theory, may sometimes have hardened our hearts and minds against outsiders' advice, our initial aim still remains.

Writers and Readers is collectively owned and operated by its members. Our legal constitution has been approved by the Cooperative Union and we are members of ICOM (Industrial Common Ownership Movement). When we try to grasp the idea animating the Co-op, we think back to the writers who first responded: Arnold Wesker, still courageous after the hard knocks of Centre 42; John Berger, just then beginning his stay in a French peasant community; Chris Searle, recognised for his radical teaching methods, collections of classroom writings and campaigns against racism in East London. What was our common point of departure? We had no declared political position – as a group – on all events. But our writers did feel that politicised practice is not, over the long term, a matter of writing slogans or even political books. It is done by challenging and rejecting, as far as possible, the implications of the categories imposed by bourgeois society on literary production. It is done by rejecting the ruthless commodity mode of publishing where book production is largely determined by profit-costing calculations.

Thus practical idealism, for us, preceded theory. The truth about the much-discussed status of the writer is unromantic. If writers truly desire a status of some account, they must struggle to become accountable. Walter Benjamin's 1934 essay, 'The Author as Producer', pioneered the idea that literary work will have to find its technical position within the relations of production; that it is essential to change not only the content but the forms and production process of literature. Categories of books themselves (fiction/non-fiction, theory/poetry); of readers (highbrow/lowbrow); of production (literary/visual); and finally of reader/writer need to be changed. The question is, what does this mean practically?

Practically and by intention, the Co-op has been a marriage of the skilled and unskilled. Writers have specific skills; but literary techniques have no status in the normal relations of production. Status is only reflected – by the 'tastes' of the publisher, 'popular acclaim', the 'market' and so on. Writers are treated in the same way as so-called passive readers. Both are excluded from the actual production and business of publishing, and both must expect books to reach them only through the market as finished commodities. Editing, design, production, sales, distribution, and accountancy – all skills other than writing – separate writers and readers from each other and from production.

The Co-op justifies its name by opposing this division. From the first, writers counted among the non-writing members, placed equally as everyone was within the democratic and production relations of the Cooperative, and made to learn the skills of publishing which few of us possessed.

Most of us now have 'sold' our books in bookshops and conferences. Writers have not

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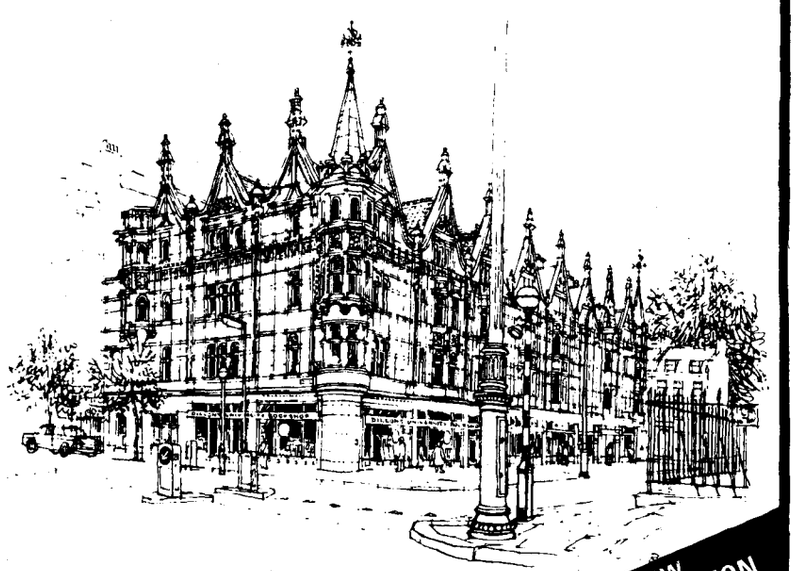

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only participated in decisions about how their books are to look, but about size of print-runs; whether the books are to be in hardback or paperback and in what proportion; and what sales and promotional procedures should be used. They have also, of course, participated in the selection or choice of books in publication. But all this is perhaps less important than the fact that at each step everyone of us has had to make decisions immediately related to the survival of the Cooperative as a viable enterprise. So that, as in a recent case, a writer has willingly withdrawn a book because its publication would have a negative effect on Cooperative finances and thus our ability to produce the rest of the list. First-hand experience of these conditions is the only way we can see of creating a writer's self-managed and worker-controlled cooperative. This is what we mean by making the writer accountable.

We began publishing with a capital of £150. Other inputs have helped, but we've attained a viable plateau of international trading mostly through intensive labour. For the first two years of our activity, no one in the Cooperative received a wage – not even those who worked in the office daily. Writers received no advances, and royalties were ploughed back into the enterprise as shares. (*Our attempts to think through a wage* scheme for authors was stopped by the sheer unavailability of funds.) In our third year, wages of £4 a day were paid to some individuals working in the office full or part-time. Salaries have gradually risen for those working internally in the Cooperative, so that now, in our fifth year, we support an average of five full-time people, each responsible for given areas; sales and distribution, publicity and promotion, accounts and administration, production, and editorial. Salaries have now been fixed at around £3000 a year and writers, if they so wish, can choose to draw out their royalties or feed them back into the Cooperative. In the last two years, we have also, when need made it imperative, paid moderate advances – though we still have not achieved our end of profit-sharing for members.

Beginning with a slim pamphlet of which, by sheer hard work, we managed to distribute some 25,000 copies, we have now published some 70 titles. Distribution, always the ultimate test of any small publisher, is what we concentrated on chiefly. We now have nationwide as well as international sales, though the bankruptcy of one of our American distributors resulted in a severe setback from which we are only beginning to emerge.

The Co-op's chief success to date has been the Beginners series, Marx, Lenin, Einstein and now Freud. These documentary comic books are introductions to some of the key questions and answers of our time. Their form represents a direct attack on educational elites and their content shows that simplifications can be intelligent and not patronising: indeed that one of the functions of intelligence is to simplify so that practice can again complicate.

An educational impetus to create access literature likewise explains the logic behind the popular 'Readers', *Politics of Literacy* and *Changing Childhood*. A separate editorial collective, Chameleon Books, currently handles most of our educational literature. These books, like the recent *Fit for work?* and controversial *Positive Image*, investigate key issues in education today.

Our fiction list is political in the broadest sense. That is, we are interested in fiction which is neither pure artefact nor simply a 'good read'. But to explain this further would entail an exposition of the category fiction/non-fiction, itself. The size of our print runs varies from title to title, but on average, we do a first edition of 5000 copies.

To survive, we must perform with a certain business-like adequacy. Of course. But our successes and failures cannot be judged simply in the light of normal accounting. Survival is meaningless unless it occurs on the basis of transforming relations between writers, publishers and readers into a new democratic and practical mode of publishing. Producing a better book is not simply our aim, but it is a likely consequence of our aims.

Briefly we can suggest why we chose a cooperative course rather than, say, putting all our energies behind a writers' union as the long-term remedy to the writer's present economic fate. Welcome as a union might be, there seems to be little point in reliving a 'craft mentality' at this stage in history. Wrangles by employee-writers to screw concessions from employer-publishers might not be useless, it's true. But what we plead for is a more radical intervention; for the writer as producer, not as employee under piece-work contract.

There is an important point to be made about our relationship to the reader. Because of the commercial barriers between readers and the books we produce, advertising and promotion cannot be abandoned. Ideal channels simply do not exist. But we do not envisage the reader as a consumer. This means that we do not *simplify* the reader for the sake of profit.

The Beginners series is a good example of this. In simplifying the subjects of these books, there is no simplification of the reader. Callow titillation, promises of self-improvement, sexual innuendoes, promotion to an elite, snobbism, etc., are not exploited as they might otherwise have been.

We hope we've not given an unwitting impression of Goliath-ism; that peculiar megalomania which seizes hold of dwarfish, and usually harmless, left groups. Our legendary pebble of £150 has not shot from a magical Marxist sling to slay giants. We are neither mad nor humourless. Chronic shortage of capital puts our members under great strain, contributes to inefficiency and to despair about books we cannot afford to do. We are still indirectly exploiting workers in the printing, binding, paper-making and other industries. We have a proper regard for all the ironies, all the debilities of a small enterprise. It was never our intention to 'take on' giants. Rather, we offer a parallel, and that much-abused word, an alternative mode of publishing in a world where monopolies flourish: an alternative in which the writer is not exploited. At present this does not mean a financial gain for the writer. But it does mean a gain in truthfulness, a certain increase in dignity.

A wisecracking Scottish reviewer once remarked that the Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative sounded to him like a kind of Burmese socialism. So be it. We accept the price and modesty of being the 'Burmese' of British publishing. Our experience remains valuable, in that we are the first in this country to have suffered, so to speak, and survived the consequences of our practice.

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Paul Binding

UnEnglish

Sleepless Days by JUREK BECKER translated from the German by Leila Vennewitz *Secker* £4.95

The Woman Taken in Adultery and **The Poggenpuhl Family** by THEODOR FONTANE translated from the German by Gabrielle Annan *Chicago* £7.50

Streets by JANOS NYIRI translated from the Hungarian by Jim O'Malley & Tom Winnifrith *Wildwood* £5.95

A 36-year-old East German schoolmaster suddenly, and in the middle of a lesson, becomes aware of the beating of his heart. This terrifies him. The pounding heart-beats are, of course, an intimation of mortality; they are also an annunciation of the existence deep within of scarcely-acknowledged emotions craving imminent recognition and release. Dismissing his class the schoolmaster walks into the nearby park, where he decides to lie down upon the grass for solace from Nature. Doing this means ignoring the many KEEP OFF signs.

These two moments of epiphany occur at the very beginning of Jurek Becker's *Sleepless Days* and, taken together, they symbolise the double plight of its hero, Karl Simrock. He is vulnerable man at the half-way stage of life, conscious of how frighteningly short of self-realisation he stands; he is also a citizen of a highly organised and repressive state which sets but little store on desires that do not admit of social expression. The novel shows us – in classically proportioned and concentrated form – Simrock's attempts to cope with his predicament, to resolve his tensions.

He separates from his wife and daughter, to whom he has for a long time ceased to respond, and, after being granted a government-approved break from teaching, takes a labouring job. He makes friends with Boris, a young working man and unlike his other acquaintances; he falls in love with Antonia, a disaffected woman at variance like himself with the conventions of career and marriage. So far the changes to his life that Simrock makes and the new problems these bring him could be part of the story of many an Englishman; the latter half of the novel, however, depicts suffering of a more particularly Eastern European nature. Antonia – in an unexpected and therefore profoundly shocking scene – attempts an escape to the West, is discovered, tried and imprisoned. And back in his teaching post Simrock tries to convey to his pupils something of his own new found credo of honesty-to-self only to land himself in severe trouble with parents, colleagues and bureaucratic authority. But never does Becker's presentation of Simrock's difficulties decline into mere protest against the East German set-up. The human heart, the recurring image throughout the novel, is his subject.

The conclusion of the novel is inspiriting. Simrock having returned to a worker's life, and having resumed his affectionate working relationship with the young man, Boris, comes to see that that shuddering intimation of mortality may not have been such a bad thing after all:

> He immediately remembered his little pain in the classroom and his great fear that Death was breathing down his neck. He thought that if he tried to see the whole affair in a favourable light, the anxiety born at that time and on which he was still feeding might after all have been a gain.

The central character of the novel is more preoccupied with metaphysical and ethical matters than are the protagonists of most English novels. *Sleepless Days*, beautifully and limpidly rendered from the German by Leila Vennewitz, is a deeply impressive book, the work of an obvious master, whose name will surely be as familiar to us in the near future as those of Heinrich Böll and Uwe Johnson.

Eastern Germany – particularly Berlin and its environs – provides the setting for much of the fiction of the great 19th-century German realist novelist Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), still little-read in this country. Here are graceful translations by Gabrielle Annan of two hitherto untranslated nouvelles, *The Woman Taken in Adultery* – written at the outset of Fontane's career as novelist (which began when he was 59!) – and *The Poggenpuhl Family*. Of these the first is the longer and stronger.

Erich Heller, in his informative introduction to this volume, tells us that Fontane spent some years in England and greatly admired English novelists. Nevertheless these two 'nouvelles', like Becker's novel, are characterised by a not very English classical unity and shapeliness. *The Woman Taken in Adultery* – the original title, *L'Adultera,* refers to Tintoretto's painting – presents adultery as a metaphor for individual freedom in a convention-ridden society. Fontane infers that respect for this freedom can be seen in Christ's own compassion towards the adulteress, a compassion Tintoretto superbly conveyed and which he himself advocates. Unlike the characters in most English novels, the people in Fontane are articulate about the wider implications of their predicament. The 'Adulteress' herself observes:

> 'Sly old Tintoretto... Just look! She's been crying. Of course she has. You know why? Because they've told her over and over again how wicked she's been. And now she believes it, or at least she wants to believe it. But her heart rebels and just won't accept it.'

But whereas in novels of interior conflict such as Becker's, austerity of form is an inestimable advantage, in Fontane – observer and chronicler of society – it seems to me ultimately a constriction. The central characters of the *Woman Taken in Adultery,* Melanie and the tedious, facetious, older husband to whom she is unfaithful, seem indeed to need the amplitude of the looser forms of the great English masters.

Streets is the first novel of Janos Nyiri, a Hungarian who fled his native country at the time of the 1956 Revolution; a group of young Hungarians' relation to the Revolution is indeed its subject. Unfortunately the translation of the novel constitutes something of a stumbling-block; no doubt little is harder to render than students' *argot* in which so much of its dialogue is conducted. Nevertheless *Streets* is a vivid presentation of the confusions of ideologies and affections within a band of young men linked by friendship and hopes; and a demonstration of the agonies of sacrificing the personal to the public.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Spurling

Climbing the Hill of Auvers

Post-Impressionism *Royal Academy*
Post-Impressionism by JOHN REWALD *Secker* £22.50

The term Post-Impressionism was coined by Roger Fry in 1910 for his notorious exhibition at the Grafton Galleries. 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' was centred on Gauguin, Van Gogh and Cézanne and included Seurat, Redon, Matisse and Picasso. Fry's '2nd Post-Impressionist Exhibition' in 1912 retained Cézanne and added Douanier Rousseau, but was dominated by Matisse and Picasso. But if Fry's term was always vague (a 'somewhat negative label' as he called it) and has been used since chiefly as a roomy antechamber between Impressionism and Cubism, it was given new authority and precision by John Rewald's outstanding book *Post-Impressionism*, originally published in America in 1956 and now revised and published here for the first time.

In this first volume, covering the years 1886-93 (the second is yet to be published) Rewald concentrates on Gauguin, Van Gogh and Seurat and re-erects around them the whole structure of experiment and innovation which emerged in reaction to Impressionism and from which in turn came Fry's younger generation, the pioneers of 20th-century art. Cézanne (whose work was little known until 1895) and the Gauguin of the South Seas will no doubt provide the pillars for the second volume. Post-Impressionism, in other words, is a complex phenomenon and cannot be reduced to the dimensions of a single art-historically convenient Movement, but since Rewald's labour of Hercules it no longer needs to be a confusing or dubious one.

The exhibition at the Royal Academy, supported by IBM, starts well on Rewaldian lines with a row of portrait banners – Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne and Seurat – tethered to the facade of Burlington House. Inside, chaos is come again. Post-Impressionism has been reconverted into a glorified Academy Summer Show, a mass of paintings partly organised and partly just clapped on the walls. The fact that many of the paintings are masterpieces and that many more are of special interest for the understanding both of Post-Impressionism and of the development of individual artists makes it all the more infuriating that they are here, as it were, re-buried in their period. Post-Impressionism dissolves, as the exhibition's sub-title admits, into 'Cross-Currents in European Painting'.

Even as such, of course, it's a fascinating show and for those who are suspicious of 'isms' and bored or uncomfortable with Masters, its curiosities may be its chief pleasure. There is Pellizza's gigantic dawn chorus of workers, for instance, *The Fourth Estate*; early divisionist paintings by the future Futurists; Salon horrors by such as Martin and Maignan; naturalist heavies like Bastien-Lepage and sunny lightweights like Helleu (Proust's Elstir); neat, foursquare Englishmen, *plein air* Scotsmen, gloomy Netherlanders and romantic Germans; and an early anti-art joke (1883) in the form of a piece of white paper entitled *First Communion of Anaemic Young Girls in the Snow*. The period almost begins to resemble our own, a tangle of conflicting styles and tendencies, suggesting a general loss of conviction and direction after the short-lived excitement of the Sixties (their Impressionism, our Pop and Abstract). No doubt, as Alan Bowness (Chairman of the Selection Committee) observes in his catalogue introduction, that was how it seemed at the time, but is that a justification, now that we have gained the advantage of hindsight, for plunging back into the maelstrom? The point

Henri Matisse: Young Sailor I

about the period, though nobody knew it then and only a few were bold enough to believe it, is that it produced the four men on the banners and their successors. What they were trying to do, what they did and what effect it had on those around them and those that came after them should have been demonstrated by this show. The catalogue, indeed, with its admirable, detailed entries, was obviously written with that intention, but the decision to include so much of only marginal interest and above all the way the show has been hung work against it. Any visitor who wishes to study Post-Impressionism must be grateful that so many normally inaccessible works from private collections and small public galleries have been assembled in one place, but he will be at his wits' end, darting back and forth from room to room and feverishly thumbing his catalogue, to join together what the RA has put asunder and, worse still, to put asunder what the RA has joined together.

The grand junction of early Post-Impressionism was Camille Pissarro. The other leading Impressionists went off to find their own salvation, but Pissarro, the oldest of them, stayed around to mix with the new generation. Having already influenced his friend Cézanne, he befriended and influenced Gauguin and Van Gogh and when, in 1885-6, Seurat and Signac unveiled their new 'scientific' technique of coloured dots, christened 'pointillism' or 'Neo-Impressionism', Pissarro joined them. He also shared their extreme left-wing views: if his technique derived from Impressionism, his subject-matter came from Millet. He painted the peasants in their landscape, not the bourgeoisie in theirs. Pissarro is represented in Gallery 1 (a heterogeneous pre-Post-Impressionist assemblage) by peasant painting done both before and after his Neo-Impressionist phase, in Gallery III (among the 'Great Masters') by another peasant painting which is moving away from Neo-Impressionism, and in Gallery V (among Seurat and his school) by a pointillist seascape and a semi-pointillist landscape. It is virtually impossible to get any sense of Pissarro's own development or to understand his key position among the Post-Impressionists.

Cézanne is represented in Rooms I and III with 4 landscapes, 2 figure paintings and a still-life. True, in Room I one can compare his brushwork with Gauguin's (which at one stage owed something to Cézanne's), but there is no tie-up at all between Cézanne and those who were deeply indebted to him, namely Matisse, Derain and Picasso in the last room. The *Fauves* are mainly represented and appear more as a coda to Post-Impressionism than its culmination. Yet in their work three of the disparate strands of Post-Impressionism curve together again – Cézanne's form, Gauguin's colour and Seurat's scintillating light. All three Masters are cut off from their heirs by seas of distracting paintwork, roomsful of jostling, international camp-followers, whose claim to be there at all seems more often the need to fill the Academy than their contribution to Post-Impressionism.

One could multiply examples. Two rooms are superfluously diverted to a whole sub-exhibition of paintings done in Brittany. Monet is there, so is very early earth-coloured Matisse, plus Gauguin and his friend Emile Bernard (another essential Post-Impressionist link-man, through his early contacts with the Neo-Impressionists and his later friendship with Cézanne). But Tom, Dick and Harry are there too. When it comes to the Pont-Aven group and the Nabis, both centred on Gauguin and Brittany and important to Post-Impressionism through their opposition to pointillism and their close relations with the literary Symbolists, they are squeezed into another gallery with Toulouse-Lautrec, who ought to be in the company of Degas and 'blue-period' Picasso. Meanwhile the modest Emile Shuffenecker, who introduced Bernard both to Gauguin (once a fellow-member of Shuffenecker's stockbroking firm) and to Neo-Impressionism and directly affected Gauguin's evolution away from Impressionism, is lost in the Seurat-Signac gallery.

As for Van Gogh and Gauguin, they are represented by 13 and 14 sumptuous paintings respectively, but their early work is separated from their later, which is itself hung in haphazard order (chronology being of the first importance to any proper appreciation of these restless experimenters), and both are isolated from their common heirs, Munch and

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the German Expressionists.

All this may sound like nit-picking and certainly shouldn't deter anyone from visiting the show as often as possible simply to enjoy its individual paintings. My real criticism is not that Rewald's magnificent structure is reduced to rubble or that the innocent visitor will be no clearer about Post-Impressionism when he comes out than when he went in, but that the exhibition does not give any feeling of that great fourfold advance in pictorial expression – form, colour, space and meaning – which started out from the base camp of Impressionism and whose momentum is still carrying our own contemporaries. Bernard wrote, describing Van Gogh's funeral: 'we climbed the hill of Auvers talking of him, of the bold forward thrust he has given to art ...' Descending the steps of the Academy under the banners of the four heroes I felt more as if I had been at a zoo than participating in the greatest forward thrust since the Renaissance.

Correction:
We regret that, due to our mistake, John Spurling's reference last week to Picasso's decline after the second world war appeared as 'after the first world war'.

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Mark Kidel

Highstreet Madness

Rock has flirted with hell and madness since early psychedelic days, with Arthur Brown invoking the transmuting power of fire and going off the rails in the process, Syd Barrett taking a similar but more introspective one-way trip out of consensus reality and Jim Morrison playing out the darker fantasies of a sexually repressed culture, the victim, as so many others of his generation, of a death not unconnected with an obsessive use of mind-altering drugs. One of the myths of our time has been that madness represents the valid and sensitive response to a crazy world and so-called normality a docile adjustment to the horrors around us. Brown, Barrett and Morrison were some of the first rock heroes to explore the brink, turning their backs on the all-pervading greyness. Twelve years later the cult of derangement and a rejection of conventional values has grown into something of a popular fashion: madness has hit the high street and much of today's rock is a sombre exorcism of Desolation Row – without the offer of a New Morning that makes Bob Dylan so special – reflecting a deep concern with the dehumanising impact of technology, the manipulation of image, the breakdown of communication and, perhaps most of all, the insidious policing of our minds.

Talking Heads (their stylish name borrowed from TV jargon) have developed over three albums an idiosyncratic personality that combines the beat of black dance music with unhinged anger and a mood of despair. Their latest release *Fear of Music* (Sire SRK 6076) shows a rare maturity and versatility: rhythm, centred around Tina Weymouth's punchy bass line, is one of its most distinctive characteristics, but its musical strength lies in an elaborate sense of texture, a layering of hard-edged and softer sounds, and a dramatic use of fore- and background. Much of the credit for the orchestration of Talking Heads' talents must go to Brian Eno – the man most responsible for the development of a contemporary style that mixes synthesizer, studio techniques and electric instruments, with subtlety rather than the superficial appeal favoured by commercially successful producers like Giorgio Moroder. David Byrne, Talking Heads' vocalist, plays the part of the articulate lunatic to perfection, living up to the persona first unveiled on 'Psychokiller – Qu'est-ce que c'est?' from the band's first album. 'I'm mad, and that's a fact!' Byrne belts out on *Animals* a song that illustrates perfectly the overlap between acute paranoia and a healthy sense of the absurd which pervades the whole record.

Punishment of Luxury (Punilux for short) display something of the same combination on their first album *Laughing Academy* (Liberty/United Artists UAG 30258). Like Talking Heads, they are an 'art school band', and although they come from Newcastle rather than Rhode Island, they share the same fundamental concerns, from 'Obsession', a sensitive cry from the worried heart of a rapist to 'Puppet Life' ('Wires stick through my soul/My actions are controlled') a track about humanity's latest set of chains. A clear philosophy emerges from Punilux's record: freedom is not just a matter of a properly structured society or right forms of ownership; we are restrained *within our selves*, unable to live out our fullest potential. We have lost our way, out of touch with our true unbridled nature – symbolised by Babylon, the Mother of Harlots. Institutionalised 'conscience' (or 'Excess bleeding heart' as Punilux put it) has driven us away from free expression and creativity, our most basic urges channelled instead into baboon-like or criminal behaviour. Punilux call for a total revolution of consciousness: 'In the world everything needs refocusing.' Their music is dramatic, at times a little *too* theatrical, a cross between vintage psychedelia and contemporary high energy rock.

Wire are another 'art-rock' group – their latest London performances have been conducted with the assistance of students from the Central School of Art – and they too hark back to the sound of the mid- and late-Sixties, with echoes of early Pink Floyd, Syd Barrett and Kevin Ayers. Their sophistication is reflected by the use on their third album *'154'* (EMI Harvest SHSP 4105) of unconventional instruments like the *cor anglais* and the participation of avant-garde composer Tim Souster. Their lyrics are oblique but powerful, proceeding by association rather than the linear story style of most popular song. While many bands today choose the discipline of a clean sound, each instrument clearly separated from all others, Wire's music is thick and misty – a wall of effects that relies on a total feel without falling into orchestral pomposity.

Wire's strength stems from the power of mystery and allusion. The Gang of Four, on the other hand, respond to the same external stimuli with a much more explicit anger and confusion. Wire are poets, while the Gang of Four, with their obviously political name, choose to be rock guerrillas, singing on their first album, ironically titled *Entertainment* (EMI EMC 3313), of the 'dirt behind the daydream', the horror of Northern Ireland, for instance, so neatly forgotten in the fantasies upon which we depend for survival. They are trying to hit hard, and on occasion they succeed, with a strong message and a minimalist approach to their music, but a relentless and rhythmic battering of the senses, while appropriate to their feelings, can become deadening stretched out over two sides of an LP.

Not all of today's romantics (for it is a certain romanticism which makes for despair) choose to be dour, acid or brutal. XTC, no less concerned about dehumanisation and thought-control than Talking Heads, Punilux, the Gang of Four or any of the vintage New Wavers like The Clash or Sham 69, approach the subject with humour and an unashamed wish to be popular. 'Making Plans for Nigel', a suitable hymn for the dark ages of the Welfare State, has been a hit single, and it is fairly representative of a very enjoyable third album (*Drums and Wire* Virgin V 2129) featuring, as before, highly sophisticated but very pop-orientated music. XTC are clearly intelligent, sensitive and musically talented, but they also have an ear for the charts, and it is this mixture which makes them so appealing and so original. The content is serious enough: 'Real by Reel' deals with the arrival of 1984 before its time – 'they can tape what you say, they can tape what you think' – and 'Millions' with China's final surrender to the cancer of 'Western thinking'. The instrumental work is as clever as anything by Frank Zappa, but XTC have always avoided solemnity by injecting just enough of the bizarre and zany into all their material.

Cowboys International are a new band, and they too, judging by their first album (*The Original Sin* Virgin V 2136), value accessibility: Ken Lockie's songs, ingeniously produced by Dennis MacKay, are even more likely Top Ten material than XTC's, without making any more compromise in the direction of commercial gimmickry. They move with ease from the big Spector-ish sound of 'Pointy Shoes' and 'Aftermath' to the clipped synthesizer rhythms of 'Thrash', displaying the confidence which only comes with true individuality. This is without doubt one of the most exciting and enjoyable first albums of 1979, with music that is unclassifiable, its roots firmly set in all the popular styles of the last 15 years, but sounding as fresh as if those connections did not exist. With a start of this quality, it is certain that Cowboys International will ride far together.

The Police, in comparison, for all their success on both sides of the Atlantic, seem a little pallid. *Regatta de Blanc* (A & M AMLH 64792) has its good moments, but it is too clearly programmed for success, lacking in spontaneity, with its nods to New Wave Energy, reggae rhythm and Dub echo. Sting has a distinctive voice, the lyrics are fashionably 'concerned' and some of it is very dance-

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able, but the album misses the bite that would make its chart success seem more than a very clever calculation.

The Police are an 'in' band, and so are Madness, one of the bands, along with the Specials and The Selecter, to have made a cult out of reviving the sound of Ska and Blue Beat. It is a revival which reflects perhaps a need for fun and innocence – a very different kind of madness to the inferno of Punilux or Talking Heads. Madness's first LP *(One Step Beyond . . .* Stiff Seez 17) combines the jerky bounce of blue beat with a cockney slant. Madness are wild on stage, and this album can only give a faint idea of their live act, but its appearance does illustrate a desire to dance our present-day blues and despair away that runs alongside the need to wallow in, and hopefully transcend, the horror of it all.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Play Off

Stage Struck by SIMON GRAY *Vaudeville*
Rookery Nook by BEN TRAVERS *Her Majesty's*
Waiting for the Parade by JOHN MURRELL *Lyric, Hammersmith*
The Last of the Red-Hot Lovers by NEIL SIMON *Criterion*

Those who like to think of Simon Gray as a commercial huckster with ideas above his station – which his grimmer accusers would define as Ongar or Theydon Bois rather than Victoria or Waterloo – will be much relieved by *Stage Struck*. It is a distraction, an entertainment, and pretends to be nothing more. But that is no reason for those of us who have supported him through thick, if not always through thin, to start scratching his name out of our professional address books. After a period spent battling in and with the world of telegrams and anger, you and I tend to feel in need of a day off; and in the same way and sense, Simon Gray is entitled to a play off.

After the speedy demise of his serious and admirable *Rear Column* and the less-than-rhapsodic reception of his interesting if uneven *Close of Play*, he has surely earned the change that is, we're told, as good as a rest. To repudiate him now would be akin to forgetting that Graham Greene produced *The Heart of the Matter* just after *The Ministry of Fear*.

Well, all right, Gray is as different from Greene as beige is from black; nevertheless *Stage Struck* is not as distinctive a piece as one could wish. True it displays some of that fascination with callousness, betrayal and general human perversity to be found at the puckered heart of Gray's best work. A wife speaks with fastidious disgust of the perfume she's smelt on her husband's face, the alien hair on his coat, the lipstick smeared across his flies. She then proceeds to elbow him out of the marital nest with peculiar cruelty, coolly luxuriating in her own infidelities, threatening him with penury, reminding him of her own status, which is that of a celebrated actress, and of his own, 'a failure . . . not even a success *manqué*'. A little later, he ripostes by reducing her supposed mentor to blubbing infantilism. There are nastinesses enough in *Stage Struck* and acid, biting lines in abundance; but they are there, not so much to illustrate Gray's glum view of relationships, rather to activate and decorate a sensational plot. An idiosyncratic vision balloons into melodrama.

One could not object if the melodrama were good, or good of its kind; but it is, alas, a not-very-remarkable example of the brand of thriller patented by Anthony Shaffer. Their formula includes wily machinations, disguises, guns that fire without killing, victims who fall without dying, and, logically enough, a theatrical or quasi-theatrical setting. It works by misleading the audience, then dramatically surprising it with unlooked for but logical revalations.

Stage Struck suggests, however, that the genre's ingenuities are becoming predictable with repetition and familiarity. What looks like the corpse of Sheila Ballantine's bitch-wife crashes down from the ceiling, knife in breast, rope round neck. What palpably *is* Alan Bates's avenger-husband drops behind the sofa, clutching what purports to be a bullet-wound. The true surprise, the authentic sensation, would be that they were both actually dead, but experience lulls any such tremors.

Nigel Stock, playing a lordly psychiatrist who isn't what he seems, and Andrew Sharp, an Australian student who seems what he isn't, complete the quartet more than serviceably; but it is, of course, Bates who is expected to pull and please the Christmas crowds. I don't doubt he will succeed. Everyone enjoys that truculence, that sense of mischief, that puckish bravado in the teeth of trouble, even if we've seen it all rather often before. What Bates misses is a lovelorn vulnerability that supposedly lurks behind the brass, waiting to unmask itself: which is a pity, since the play's last surprise depends on its existence, and not at all a pity, since the surprise itself is woefully sentimental!. Perhaps Mr Gray should write a more plausible, consistent and serious play for him. Perhaps he should simply write another play, period.

'I can understand Anthony Blunt now,' muttered a director of my acquaintance midway through *Rookery Nook*. He had evidently been appalled by the little-Englandism suggested by the play's most formidable grotesque, a masterful Prussian with a killer-hound in tow, and by the public-school sprigs who genially steal his stepdaughter from him; and, to judge by the unsmiling faces around me, much of the first-night audience shared, if not precisely that feeling, at least one of having been plumped down in awesomely alien corn.

The Aldwych farces of the 1920s were an institution, and, like all institutions, had their own totems, rules, conventions. How could we

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be expected to react to Andrew Robertson's fragile wail of 'Oh, misery me!' as our grandfathers did to Robertson Hare, who played the oppressed husband again and again, and had turned the phrase into a signature tune of his own? How laugh at the char's offer to show the young gents her 'quarters' when she's played by a tiny, twitching Dora Bryan instead of the massively-mattressed Mary Brough? Or, for that matter, at any of the play's thousand unfashionable puns?

Well, perhaps we might have enjoyed ourselves more if Frank Dunlop's cast had not so feverishly forced us to do so. The gods have allotted them far too big a theatre, and they compensate by drubbing our eardrums and drenching the front stalls in spit and whirling sweat. The result is that we miss what Travers forlornly hoped we would see: some sepia shades in the comic colouring-book; a little character behind the caricature; conceivably even some substance in the emotions extravagantly on display.

Perhaps 'libido' is an apter word than 'emotion'. The tension of Travers's farces invariably comes from battles between the susceptible and the repressive. His more attractive characters like sex and unabashedly advertise their liking, married or not; they seek it as far and fast as the threatical taboos of the day will permit; and the plays themselves celebrate it without stint or reservation. Travers may have been class- and cast-bound: prudish or prurient, never. But how can we be asked to share the triumph of tennis-club Pans over a coven of mean-spirited Whitehouses – the situation of *Rookery Nook* precisely – when all is din and dizziness?

Very briefly, *Parade* is a sensitive, touching, but not enormously imaginative piece about women coping, or not coping, with the muffled impact of the second world war on Calgary, a million miles away; and *Lovers* involves a fish restaurateur who inveigles three women, respectively hard-boiled, scatty and lachrymose into his seducer's eyrie, only to fail them all and decide that wifie is best. Alan Ayckbourn, our own master-chronicler of menopausal disaster-areas, would have handled the tale better because, for all his faults, he doesn't wear a tepid rubber hot-water-bottle in his heart-cavity. Neil Simon, for all his virtues, does.

Films

John Coleman

Besieged

Junoon (AA) *Academy One*
The Outsider (AA) *Gate Two*
Radio On (X) *Screen on the Hill*
Martin (X) *Screen on the Green; Cinecenta; Odeon, Kensington*
The Jericho Mile (AA) *Classic, Haymarket; Studio, Oxford Street; Scene; ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Fulham and Edgware Roads*
Yesterday's Harp (A) *Empire*

Shyam Benegal's *Junoon*, or 'Obsession', comes as a worthy reminder that not every Indian film of distinction is automatically signed Satyajit Ray. And yet – set, as it is, around the time of the Mutiny in 1857 – it has a few clear affinities with Ray's strange and marvellous *The Chess Players*, historically sited a year earlier. In both films the big, epoch-making events (the enforced abdication of a fat, versifying Nawab; the bloody business of insurrection) are presented forcefully enough as facts but hardly carry the weight one might have expected, serving rather as authentic backgrounds against which private, domestic forms of mania are played out to the hilt. In both films wives are ruthlessly deprived of emotional and sexual fulfilment.

If Benegal's is by far the crueller of the two, it is because his tormented hero's obsession is with another women, young Ruth (Nafisa Ali). When her father is slaughtered along with another women, young Ruth (Nafisa Sunday morning in church, he leaves behind a half-Indian wife Mariam (Jennifer Kendal) and an ailing mother-in-law. Passionate Javed (Shashi Kapoor), a Pathan nobleman in the Fairbanks mould, has desired Ruth from afar. Now he seizes his chance, abducts the three women from their temporary sanctuary, installs them in his palace alongside his beautiful, outraged wife Firdaus (Shabana Azmi), and lays siege to the girl, threatening her mother, playing distractedly with his pigeons, ignoring the encroaching war.

Although a whirling, eye-rolling fakir rather tiresomely punctuates the overall action with songs and chants of love and bloodshed, and there are some colourful set-piece battles, the film's enchanted core lies in the by-play among the women, between the women and Javed, who – as a Muslim – wants Ruth as second wife. At one moment, the Britishness of the survivors is savagely mocked: they don't wash correctly, they use paper 'after ablutions', they *kiss*. Mariam counters wildly when Ruth dresses Indian-style: 'How do I look, mama?' 'Like a nautch girl'. Then there is a lyric interlude at an aunt's place, outdoors, the camera withdrawing to frame a long idyllic shot of a swing in use among sun-dappled trees: a feminine time out of carnage, full of affection, with Mariam encouraged to sing: 'Come live with me and be my love'. But blood is spilt, Javed's militant brother-in-law dies. Javed goes to war at last, Delhi is held again by the British, cartloads of refugees rumble off. With Javed rapping imperiously on a church door, Ruth weakening, there is a closing, enigmatic flourish, a resigned courtliness that is in ironic contrast to a brief earlier passage of sexual frenzy between husband and long-neglected wife: somehow too much a dying fall.

A first feature written (from someone else's unpublished novel) and directed by an Italo-American, Tony Luraschi, and apparently

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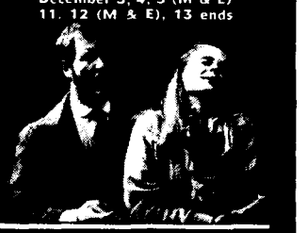
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Dutch-financed, *The Outsider* is set in troubled Ireland and already notorious for its rejection by the London Film Festival as not good enough. Coming therefore with zero expectations, confirmed by the opening minutes, I stayed to be agreeably surprised. Of course, this is mined terrain, but one had not anticipated such a sustained attempt – however mishandled – at balance. Michael (Craig Wasson), a young American disillusioned by a stint in Vietnam and fed heroic tales by his rich Irish immigrant grandpa, quits Detroit for County Monaghan and the IRA. He is soon set up by both factions: the Provisionals plan to see him off with a stolen British bullet, so stirring up pro-IRA feeling and funds Stateside; a pair of supercilious British officers try to fake that he's the informer the IRA are gunning for. Luck – in the form of a jammed rifle, a finger pointed at the genuine leak – is doubly with Michael and he makes a sickened getaway, back to a superfluous kick-in-the-teeth coda in Detroit. Ricardo Aronovitch's camera traps telling images of a scragged and battered Belfast; there is an ugly torture scene, with an English major in cool attendance; the over-easy moral would seem, 'A plague on both your houses'.

At least, something has been tried. The Scottish army deserter – who saw a pal killed in Northern Ireland, suddenly howls, 'Bastards! Bastards!' and subsequently, 'British government, fuck 'em' – is presumably a capsule version of the same dichotomy (this hysterical fellow fugitively pops up in Chris Petit's *Radio On*), but one hardly feels Petit's quoted comment on this episode to be fully justified: 'I wanted to get that in because it just hasn't been discussed before on film'. *Discussed?* This debut as writer-director by a former film reviewer for *Time Out* was financed by the BFI Production Board, the NFFC and Wim Wenders's Road Movies. It is a road movie. It is a British road movie, going by car from London to Bristol and making the black-and-white landscape look very dull.

Moody Robert (David Beames: if he does, I missed it), a DJ for an in-house radio station at a London biscuit factory, is driving to Bristol because his brother has just been found there, dead in a bath. A very long tracking shot at the start has travelled waveringly round a flat, taking in a written message pinned to a wall, ending up on legs in a bath and a radio, on. Since Robert quickly loses interest in his brother's fate, I do not see why I should bother either. And since this is a road movie pre-sold to German TV, we see FREE ASTRID PROLL on a brick wall and Robert picks up two German girls, one of whom is hoping to get back her little daughter Alice, since Wim Wenders made a film called *Alice in the Cities* and this German actress was in that too. Often playing German pop, there is usually a radio on in *Radio On*.

Ever since *Night of the Living Dead*, people talk in hushed tones of George Romero. Why, when his low-budget *Martin* is so clearly low-budget, feeble-minded and – literally – bloody silly? The 17-year-old of the title arrives in a dilapidated steel town near Pittsburgh, having drugged, vampirised and possibly penetrated a girl on the train. This is shot and enacted for maximum shock appeal.

A rung up from this is Michael Mann's sentimental but cleanly devised and executed *The Jericho Mile*, with Peter Strauss as the lonely sub-four-minute runner and murderer whose prowess and all-round bottle unite ethnic groups in Folsom Prison behind him: smug officialdom, of course, blows his chance at the Olympics. After a false start or three drunkard Ian McShane really buckles down in *Yesterday's Hero*, making his comeback to big football: he dumps about a thousand liquor containers, then CUT TO him and the milkman – 'Did you leave those extra yoghourts?' Jackie Collins, wordperson: I salute you.

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Opera

Peter Conrad

Dumb Ox

Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny *Metropolitan Opera, New York*
Street Scene *New York City Opera*

Between *Mahagonny* (1930) and *Street Scene* (1947), Kurt Weill fled from Germany to the United States, and in the process deserted satire for sentimentality. The earlier work, in collaboration with Brecht, is an epic conspectus of capitalist vice; the later work, adapted from a play by Elmer Rice, has contracted to a single shabby tenement in New York, and its characters, rather than epically propounding the laws of social and economic survival as do those of *Mahagonny*, are preoccupied with pastoral self-deception, dreaming of alternatives to their greedy, grubby city.

Even in *Mahagonny*, music malingers. In an appendix to his play, Brecht starchily discriminated between opera which is epic – prohibiting emotional identification and critically inspecting its material instead – and opera which is merely culinary, pandering to the gross appetites of its wealthy clientele. But can music ever be so austerely alienatory as Brecht wishes? Weill's certainly isn't: hence his interpolation of the tender duet about the herons in a scene excoriating commercial love, and his uncertainty about the role of Jenny – should she sing like an ingratiating operatic soprano or rancidly croak like Lotte Lenya?

Though Brecht's *Mahagonny* is a study of economic villainy, Weill's musical commentary changes it to a work about the pursuit of pleasure. Brecht's central character is the martyred lumber-jack Mahoney, but Weill's central character is the innocently depraved good-time-girl Jenny. Like music, the city of Mahagonny devotes itself to the actualisation of one's dreams. As soon as the lumberjacks require sex, the procuress Mrs Begbick parades a line of ductile cuties. Song in this work is a medium not of alienatory critique, as Brecht wished, but of wishful fantasy (Jenny's 'Moon of Alabama', the yearning Benares ensemble), and an assertion of appetitive freedom: during the hurricane Mahoney sings defiantly.

By the time of *Street Scene*, Weill's music has liberated itself from the self-denying Brechtian discipline. Elmer Rice's play is a tragedy about congestion. For New York City collectivises people, isolating them but robbing them of privacy and of personal independence. However in Weill's opera they have the extra recourse of song, which releases them from their bondage. The Brechtian radical view is included, in the figure of Kaplan, only to be discounted. Instead of agitating to change their lot, these people sing of their desires to escape into lyrical oblivion. They join in a celebration of pleasures Brecht would have despised as culinary: the opera is set on a muggy summer day, and one of its early ensembles is in praise of ice cream. As if acknowledging that its province is romantic dreams, the music doesn't even try to cope with Rice's low-life tragedy. The murder and the subsequent affray are conducted only in dialogue.

Migrating first from subversive Berlin cabarets to the brassy popularity of Broadway, Weill has at last made it to the plutocratic palaces of Lincoln Center. The New York City Opera's fine *Street Scene* was relayed on national television last month, and the Met has an alert and enterprising new production of *Mahagonny*. Playing this opera to the bespangled social class which it is denouncing has its attendant ironies: the gala audience at the premiere suffered the music politely but impatiently, anxious to repair to a culinary orgy upstairs in the grand tier restaurant. The titters of condescension with which the Met's moneyed patrons greeted Brecht's slangy placards defused the satire, and a truck driven on stage by the felons was hailed by a flurry of applause, as if *Mahagonny* were to be appreciated as spectacle. But John Dexter's production teases this complacency in the marching finale when, demolishing illusion, he exposes the bare concrete hangar of the backstage area with its scurrying technicians and at the same time sends the citizens of Mahagonny in procession through the theatre with their polemical banners.

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Mahagonny has been extravagantly cast. This in itself is risky: true to the Brechtian aesthetic, Lotte Lenya resents opera singers, because their art ennobles whatever they touch. At the Met the singers were indeed welcomed with knowing laughter, in the suspicion that they were amiably parodying themselves. Thus Richard Cassilly adapts his portrayals of shaggy Wagnerian savages to present Mahoney as a heroic dumb ox, and Astrid Varnay, a broken-down Brünhilde with a Brooklyn snarl, lends her raucous wreck of a voice to the lewd Leocadia Begbick. But if they're too good for their roles, then so much the better.

The transition between demotic cabaret and hieratic opera is more easily managed by Teresa Stratas, who at 16 warbled in smoky Toronto nightclubs to support her impoverished family. Her Jenny, following her Lulu, is another of Stratas's reports on the eternal woman. Like all great performers, she has an alluring sexual ambiguity. The singing voice is shrilly feminine, but her speaking register is gruff and throatily masculine.

For Stratas, Jenny is an affectionate, compassionate but entirely ruthless tart. She has a selfless professional conscience, enslaving herself to her customers, but, as she sadly explains to Mahoney, she can't be expected to pay, and must look after herself first. In her angry refusal to be undervalued as she negotiates a price, there's an incongruous dignity: 'Man', as she says, 'is not a beast.' Stratas has listened to Weill rather than Brecht. The librettist may think of the city of Mahagonny as hell, but the composer knows that human beings can salvage self-respect there and endows them with music as their means of restitution.

Television

Julian Barnes

Up & Under

There's a celebrated moment in a low-rent Western where a villain was meant to upbraid his vacillating pardner with the contemptuous line, 'What's the matter with you – *scruples*?' Alas, the actor misread his script and what was immortalised on film instead was a more tender, personalised version: 'What's the matter with *you*, Scruples?' This inventive muff came back to me during John Motson's commentary on the Ipswich v. Southampton game in *Match of the Day* (BBC-1). As Ipswich swept upfield, Motson, in a rising howl of anticipation, declared, 'And Mariner's got Options to his right.' Mariner duly slipped the ball out to Options, who lofted it into the centre, where a grateful striker tucked it away.

You could say that one of Anthony Eden's troubles during the Suez Crisis was that he didn't have Options to his Right: he was already being crowded into touch on that side of the field before he'd crossed the half-way line. Ian Curteis's three-hour play on the subject, *Suez 1956* (BBC-1), arrived by coincidence only a few weeks after James Cameron's delayed *Sound of the Guns*. This time round, the journalists got as thin a deal as the politicos did in Cameron's play. Perhaps, after two outings among the non-combatants' principles and consciences, it's time the actual participants on the ground got a look-in. I can imagine, for example, a vivid comic playlet based on the Suez experiences of the last editor of the NS, who splashed ashore at Port Said, suitcase in hand, only to discover that the ceasefire had already been called, the UN forces were in position, and the most serious offence committable was firing a shot.

Curteis's earlier *Churchill and the Generals* frequently flickered into a genuine dramatic life of its own; *Suez 1956*, while perfectly watchable, seemed more static and earthbound. The paradigm for the warmed-up-bit-of-recent-history play remains, of course, *Washington Behind Closed Doors*; but there, the main characters were lightly fictionalised (which gave the scriptwriter more elbow-room), and there was no determination to work in all those cueing historical quotes ('Thumb on the windpipe', etc) which jog our memories but perhaps discourage a playwright's inventiveness. In addition, you couldn't help feeling – despite Curteis's claim in the *Radio Times* that his play was 'controversial' and 'highly subjective' – that it was only in deepest beagle-and-trout country that *Suez 1956* would raise any hackles. It came across as a useful piece of educational TV, its macedonic construction making it rather like an updated lantern-slide lecture of the best sort. Perhaps it should be kept on file for the day when our schoolchildren finally revolt at the antiquated idea of learning from books.

While watching the *News* (BBC-1), a zoologist acquaintance of mine explained the Darwinian function of Professor Blunt's preternaturally long upper lip: it's so that you can't see his teeth when he's lying through them. The lips of the England rugby team, baffled by the prospect of having to sing 'Land of Hope and Glory' before their match at Twickenham, also made a pretty study: the lads were no more familiar with the words than Professor Blunt. The introduction of 'LOHAG' a few years ago was clearly intended to equip the English team with the same sort of belly-fire which the Welsh obtain from that hair-curling dirge down at the Arms Park. The trouble is, only a couple of the England XV, and not many more in the crowd, know what comes after 'Mother of the free'. Even though the All Blacks perform a listless and unconvinced *haka* nowadays – they're obviously wondering why they don't save their leaps for the first up and under – they looked more warlike than the men in white.

This year's All Blacks weren't as good as the side of . . . . .(fill in your preference); they just happened to be better than every other side they played, although – as has now become traditional – they generously dropped one provincial match by way of encouragement to the locals. In the two internationals, both on *Grandstand* (BBC-1), they were never really pressed, despite the perennially optimistic pre-match forecasts. At Murrayfield, Gordon Brown, the hefty lock of yesteryear, announced, 'My money's on Scotland' and 'The boys are playing a lot better than the scores suggest'. What 'the scores' actually suggested was that Scotland hadn't beaten the All Blacks in 74 years of competition, and that they hadn't won an international for two years. Scores are wise. A couple of weeks later, the pundits went on to tip England at Twickenham. But with reshuffled backs, a debutant stand-off and a pack of gritty chuggers, they were scarcely equipped to duplicate the feat of Obolonsky and his mates. The cutest comment from Bill Maclaren came when a New Zealand penalty took them from 7-3 up to 10-3: 'And that's a blow to England – they were nicely set at just four points adrift.' They were even more nicely set, at just one point adrift, when the final whistle blew. All poised to be first in the rush for the warm bath.

Weekend Competition

No 2590

Fatboy writes; My advice to Compers on this one is frankly not to get choked. We should all take the long historical view. This view reminds us first, that an earlier version of the 'Norwich' comp was successfully run in 1976, so the authorities have openly admitted to a regressive stance; and secondly, that in any case Prof Williams and his Filth Committee have reported this week that all Filth between consenting adults is OK – or words to that effect. More interesting than this arbitrary and repressive act of censorship – a mere hiccup on the long search towards free speech – is the personal motive of this killjoy 'Control' figure. What is he doing getting into bed with the Mary Whitehouses of this world? The Comp Complex reminds him that it has seen off more editors and literary editors than Martin Fagg has pseudonyms. The Complex will survive; it will grow; it will take over more pages; it will triumph; etc. You have my word for it.

Control writes: The results of No 2590 – acronyms for itinerant randies on the Continent of Europe – added up to a dull but strainingly smutty lavatory wall. (LYONS: Let Your Organ Naturally Seep, etc, etc.) Fatboy's unfailing inventiveness failed him on this occasion; consequently the entries lacked the nimbleness and wit worthy to command two columns of our space. Freedom, I suspect, is not the issue.

No 2594 Set by Nancy Whinny

Those generous sponsors of the Arts, Messrs Oxford University Press, have re-joined the comp roll of honour by providing copies of their new edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* to ride on this one. Included in their valuable volume is Arthur Hugh Clough's *The Latest Decalogue* ('Thou shalt have one God only; who/Would be at the expense of two?' etc.) and what we'd like from you are versions of the Commandments in similar vein, but with special reference to contemporary life. Maximum of two goes each, by 14 December.

Result of No 2591 Set by Fatboy

We asked for poems which included the words *firkin, scaurous, tath, tête-bêche, lotophagous, estaminet, debulliate, aristology* – all of which can be found in *Mrs Byrne's Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure and Preposterous Words*, published by the magnificent and munificent firm of Granada Books.

Report by Toby Jugge

Some of you failed through ignorance (for the benefit of Bill Greenwell and others, *scaurous* means 'with large ankles') but the

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rest managed to produce stylish settings for Fatboy's choice of words. Six pounds apiece – and, of course, copies of the indispensable *Mrs Byrne.*

'Your ankles,' said the District Nurse, 'are *firkin* huge,
Like barrels, man. Why not try *Tath* and Lotus pills?'
Said I, 'I'm not *lotophagous,* whate'er my ills,
And as to tath, the *aristology,* you stooge,
Of this austere *estaminet* will not permit
Even a *scaurous* wretch to dine on cattle shit.'
Said she, 'Don't let your wrath *debulliate,* you ass;
You've got it all *tête-bêche,* I only meant the grass!'
BEN O'CEOARNAICHDH

My mistress's legs are *scaurous* as two trees,
And *tath* is richer brown than her pale eyes.
Lotophagous, she lives in idle ease,
Oft turns the truth *tête-bêche*, was never wise.

And yet my heart's a *firkin* full of love
Which doth *debulliate* in passion's heat.
Come, practise *aristology,* fair dove:
The brew in this *estaminet* is sweet. WENDY COPE

Tête-bêche on the menu there sported a pair
Of *lotophagous* nymphs from mythology . . .
The *estaminet*'s food didn't warrant this air
Of a temple of high *aristology,*
For the *scaurous* old chef (much in need of a bath)
Drank a *firkin* while no one was looking
And let a large bucket of nauseous *tath*
Debulliate into the cooking. BARNEY BLACKLEY

When *tath* steams gold at sunset o'er the sod
I stroll, a dreaming god, to my *estaminet*:
A *firkin* of the best champagne? smoked salmon, eh?
With classic *aristology,* I nod . . .

I hear my beer *debulliate,* and plod
Away to feed my mortal flesh *lotophagous*
On ads tête-bêche that through the *Sun's* sarcophagus
Imprint, mid chips of stone, my *scaurous* cod.
GINA BERKELEY

Above the Cèze, above the *scaurous* rocks,
The cows, *tête-bêche,* sun slanting on their backs,
Stand munching in a *lotophagous* dream –
Then piss their *firkin* back to whence it came.
And we? We watch from our *estaminet,*
Gravely discussing *aristology.*
Post-prandial juices all *debulliate:*
Foie gras, like grass, in *tath* must terminate.
LAURENCE FOWLER

'I learned my *aristology,*' I drawled, 'in caffs like this.
It's not a bad *estaminet.*' (Though the coffee tastes like piss.)
'How frightfully *lotophagous,*' she said, and bit her roll.
(Mine was a pie, which smelt like *tath* – I had to eat it whole.)
I looked her over: *scaurous,* yes, but otherwise – just so.
She might *debulliate,* I thought, or at any rate, well – *go.*
'The pub? A little *firkin*?' I suggested with a wink.
She looked right back and answered, 'No – *tête-bêche* tonight, I think.' N. N. CARDEW

Tony Miles

Chess

No 157 **July Problems**

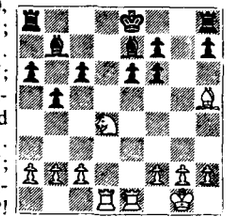
The July problems were a fairly average set. Three were straightforward but one rather difficult.

Problem 139 (r1b1r2k / p2n1qpp / 1pp1R3 / 5p2 / 5P2 / 1BP5 / PP3BPP / R2Q3K) was the easiest. After 1.R-R6! Black cannot simultaneously guard his queen and the threat of 2.RxPch and 3.Q-R5 mate. On 1 . . . QxB either 2.RxPch, KxR; 3.Q-R5ch, K-N1; 4.QxPch and 5.PxQ or 2.QxQ, PxR; 3.B-Q4ch wins the house.

Problem 141 (4rrk1 / 2b5 / p3qpnp / 1pp2N1R / 4P3 / 2P5 / PP2Q1PP / R6K) came originally from Barle – Ivkov Bled 79. The solution: 1.NxPch, K-N2 (or R2); 2.N-B5ch, K-N1 (. . . K-B2; 3.R-R7ch mates); 3.R-R8ch! Resigns. On 3 . . . KxR; 4.Q-R5ch or 3 . . . NxR; 4.Q-N4ch mates.

Problem 142 (6k1 / 6p1 / b2pp3 / r3b2P / 4PrpK / 2N5 / 1P1R1P2 / 6RB) was taken from one of my games in the World Open. I finally caught up with White's much-travelled king with 1 . . . P-N6ch! 2.KxP, R-B4ch! and if the WK stays on the N file 3 . . . R-N4ch (or . . . BxN first), whilst if it goes to the R file 3 . . . RxPch (or again . . . BxN) wins a piece similarly. So 3.P-B4, BxPch; 4.K-B3 (4.K-R4, RxPch or 4.K-N4, R-N4ch), R-B1! and White cannot protect both rooks.

Problem 140 (see diagram below) came from Barle – Miles Bled 79 which began: 1.P-K4, P-QB4; 2.N-KB3, P-K3; 3.P-Q4, PxP; 4.NxP, P-QR3; 5.N-QB3, Q-B2; 6.B-K2, P-QN4, 7.0-0, B-N2; 8.B-B3, N-QB3; 9.NxN, PxN; 10.P-K5!? (The Kasparov Gambit!) QxP; 11.R-K1, Q-Q3. (An innovation completely neglected by the annotators of the infamous Kasparov-Polugaevsky game which went . . . Q-B2; 12.B-R5. When analysing that game I thought Black has no real problems, but over the board it occurred to me that the text might be even better.) 12.B-N5 (if 12.Q-K2, N-B3 and White has no real compensation for the pawn), QxQ; 13.QRxQ, B-K2 (not N-B3, BxN and B-R5); 14.N-K4 (14.BxB, KxB! 15.N-K4, N-B3; 16. N-B5, QR-QN1! favours Black), N-B3 (not BxB, N-Q6ch); 15.BxN (the alternative is NxNch), PxB; 16.B-R5. Now White has the threat of 17.NxPch (or N-Q6ch), BxN; 18.RxPch, B-K2; 19.R(1)-K1. If 16 . . . P-K4; 17.N-Q6ch, BxN; 18.RxB, K-K2; 19.R(1)-Q1 regains the pawn, and on the most plausible 16 . . . R-QB1; 17.N-Q6ch, BxN; 18.RxB, K-K2; 19.R(I)-Q1, R-B2 comes 20.BxP!

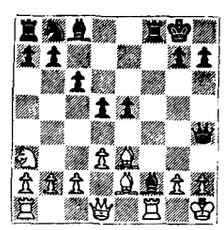


16 . . . R-Q1; 17.RxRch is also unclear. However, the whole point of Black's defence (which had to be seen several moves in advance) is 16 . . . R-R2!! This wonderfully economical move solves all Black's problems and retains the extra pawn. The game continued 17.N-Q6ch (if N-N3, B-QB1 defends everything), BxN; 18.Rxb, K-K2; 19.R(1)-Q1, B-R1! (The point is that White no longer has BxP. The extra pawn is decisive.) 20.P-QN4? (a misguided attempt to prevent . . . P-QB4), P-QB4! 21.PxP, R-QB1; 22.R(6)-Q2, RxP; 23.B-K2, B-K5 and Black won quickly.

Prizwinners: First Mr J. P. Taylor (£15); second Messrs Cornforth, Sobey, Garfath and Chand (£7.50 each); consolation prize (£5) to Mr Murphy.

Problem 157

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 12 December.

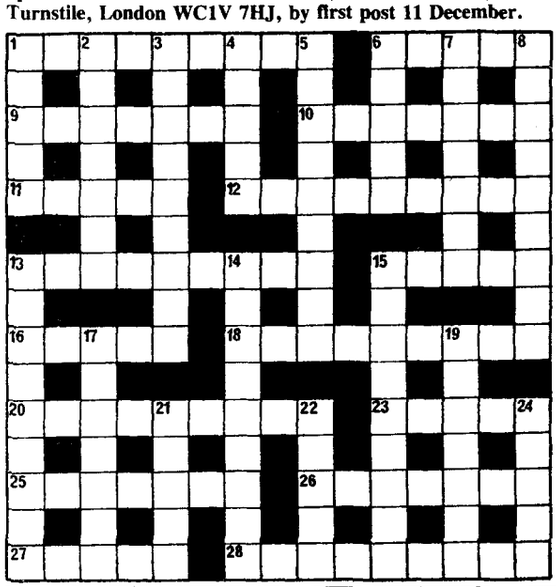


Solution to problem 155

Yes 1 . . . RxR; 2.PxR, BxP; 3.NxP, P-QR4; 4.K-B2, K-B1; 5.P-N3, PxPch; 6.KxP, BxP! 7.NxB, P-R5 followed by K-N2 draws.

Weekend Crossword 1324

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1324, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 11 December.



ACROSS

1 Fighter who has to study the soft places (9).
6 Pamphlet for an area (5).
9 Game often preferred to bridge (7).
10 Time left by union to produce a figure (7).
11 Back in Greece informing on a relative (5).
12 Ship possibly rose after a month (9).
13 *'He is the very — of politeness'* (Sheridan) (9).
15 Where there would be wickedness if the party were abandoned (5).
16 Beating often felt by hands (5).
18 Submission not often without a bowler being given a point (9).
20 Makes entrances with fresh vitality (9).
23 There is nothing in hand to bring in by stealth (5).
25 Scholarly writer gets his study back (7).
26 Goes into contortions when her wits are scattered (7).
27 Shabby because oriental dyes are used (5).
28 Birds with coloured origins (9).

DOWN

1 Fowl from a river in a tin (5).
2 The material to make a girl enthusiastic (7).
3 Pardon given when an animal is found in a river (9).
4 Material dug up (5).
5 By the Thames, it sounds like a watery meadow (9).
6 Language which is masculine in ending (5).
7 Took a boat on a river and is pointed out in a picture (7).
8 Putting up with a cry in one's sleep (9).
13 Records featuring wind instrument and drums? (9).
14 Food is tested before the colour returns (9).
15 Mean fellow puts stone under cover (9).
17 Clan from the East found in Ealing scattered (7).
19 Not one potentially therein (7).
21 Desert town? (5).
22 Dragged along to become closely associated (5).
24 Street radio turned up for sporting events (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1323

W	E	L	L	I	N	G	T	O	N	B	O	O	T	S
E	■	O	■	S	U	■	V	■	E	■	R	■	E	■
A	L	C	O	H	O	L	■	E	X	A	M	I	N	E
T	■	A	■	E	■	L	■	R	■	N	■	G	■	N
H	A	T	E	R	■	I	N	A	M	O	R	A	T	A
E	■	E	■	W	■	E	■	W	■	■	M	■	P	■
R	E	D	F	O	R	D	■	E	Z	E	K	I	E	L
F	■	■	■	O	■	■	■	N	■	■	■	E	■	■
O	R	C	A	D	E	S	■	P	A	S	T	I	E	S
R	H	■	■	I	■	A	■	C	■	N	■	A	■	■
E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T	S	■	O	C	E	A	N
C	D	■	I	■	C	■	T	■	N	■	R	■	D	■
A	N	D	A	N	T	E	■	I	N	C	I	T	E	D
S	■	A	■	G	■	R	■	N	■	E	■	I	■	I
T	H	R	E	E	L	E	G	G	E	D	R	A	C	E

Prizewinners to No 1323

M. Collins (N. Wembley)
H. Salomon (Jerusalem)
J. Katz (London N8)

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for the

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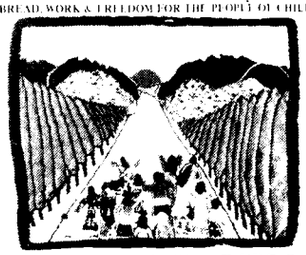

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ALDWYCH (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded bkg info 836 5332. Gorky's 'Children of The Sun', Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman's 'Once in A Lifetime'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse in Pam Gems' 'Piaf' and Howard Brenton's 'Sore Throats'.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. 'Amadeus', 'When We Are Married', 'Death of A Salesman', 'A Country Calendar', 'Lark Rise', 'Candleford' (all tickets standing). See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded info: 928 2256.

NEW END. 794 0238. 'Ionescopade' — A musical show. Tues.-Suns. 8 p.m.

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL. 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). Woody Allen's 'Manhattan' (AA). 3.30, 5.30, 7.30, 9.30.

Literary

MATCHLIGHT: British Poetry Today, Orangery, Holland Pk, 13 Dec. 7.15 p.m. Howard Sergeant & Barry L. Pearce + Byron Readings. 01-352 7409.

Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. 4 Dec. 'What's Wrong with English?' by Dr J. C. Wells.

LABOUR AND POWER — translating the Party aspiration into legislation. 1979 autumn Lecture Series: John Silkin (4 December), Peter Shore (10 December). Both at 7.30 p.m. at Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, SW1. Tickets 75p each from Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, SW1. 222 8877.

MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP lecture: Prof. Ralf Dahrendorf on 'Minority rights and minority rule', 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday 5 December at 10 St James's Square, London SW1. Admission free.

HEAR REG BIRCH speak. Britain in the 80s an industrial wasteland? Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Fri. 30 Nov. 7.30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., Holborn WC1.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM & DEMOCRACY. AGM Saturday 15 December, 2 p.m. at LSE, followed by discussion introduced by Tony Benn.

HUMAN RIGHTS in Southern Africa. Frank Judd, ex Minister of State, FCO and Ministry of Overseas Development, speaks Tues. 4 Dec. 7.15 p.m., St Barnabas Church Hall, Ranelagh Grove, SW1. (Off Pimlico Rd). All welcome. (UNA).

ADLERIAN SOCIETY. Professor Manfred Sonstegard will demonstrate the 'Counselling of Adolescents' in small groups, using Adlerian techniques; followed by a general discussion, Tuesday 4 December 7.30 p.m. Refreshments from 7.15 p.m. Community Rooms, Millman St (East Side), WC1. Visitors welcome 50p (students 25p).

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Wed. 5 Dec., 7.30 p.m., 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. Nick Butler on 'The Future of the Fabian Society'. All welcome.

ANTI-RACIST TEACHING — ALTARF discussion launching its handbook on Anti-Racist Teaching at Institute of Education (Room S16), Bedford Way, WC1, 4 December 7.30 p.m.

ICA EVENTS. The Mall, SW1. 4 Dec. 1.00: Douglas Adams talks on 'Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy'. 7.30, David Mellor on 'Modernism in Depression' accompanying the Arts Council/V & A 30s exhibition at the Hayward. 6 Dec. 7.30 Adamantios Diamantis, Cypriot Artist talks about his work and exhibition at the Mall Galleries. 80p. 930 3647.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sun. 2 Dec. 8 p.m. 'Wisdom from the Past'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

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